

Statement of I.R. Iran on Global road map on defeating meningitis by 2030

Madam Chairperson

We appreciate the DG for this report and the secretariat for organizing the valuable document of A76/7. Acute bacterial meningitis in addition to being a medical emergency, is an important public health problem that challenges the health systems of all countries. Factors such as the ability to spread from one person to another and to cause an outbreak, the severity of the disease, the potential to create irreversible complications including death or permanent disability, increasing the use of antibiotics and intensifying antimicrobial resistance, and the ability to prevent it in many cases, all indicate the need to address this disease at the global health level.

The I.R Iran welcomes the development of a road map to deal with meningitis and considers it a basis for strengthening regional and national programs to intensify the fight against this disease. Improving access of children and other high-risk groups to effective vaccines for primary prevention, strengthening disease surveillance systems, improving diagnostic methods, appropriate prescription of antibiotics and providing rehabilitation facilities to reduce the burden of disabilities caused by meningitis are on the plan of Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

In this regard and considering prevalence of pneumococcus in etiology of bacterial meningitis, with the support of related international organizations (GAVI and

UNICEF), we intend to add the pneumococcal vaccine to the national immunization plan for children in 2023.

In order to increase accessibility and affordability of effective vaccines against bacterial meningitis agents in all countries, international support and further cooperation of countries in technology transfer is requested to expand vaccine production capacity in developing countries. This will lead to improving equity in access.

It should be noted that the meningitis surveillance system is mainly hospital-based and PHC does not play an important role except for the prophylaxis of contact cases and vaccination e.g. in closed crowded settings. Many essential data are missing in developing countries. Therefore, it is suggested:

1. To strengthen the hospital and laboratory surveillance systems in order to address the missing data
2. To develop clinical guidelines to strengthen the clinical management of the disease.

Thank you for the floor, Madame Chair