

**150TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION**

**REGIONAL STATEMENT DELIVERED BY KENYA ON AGENDA ITEMS 15.3:
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES: WHO'S WORK IN EMERGENCIES AND
15.5: GLOBAL HEALTH FOR PEACE INITIATIVE**

Kenya is pleased to present this statement on behalf of the 47 Member States of the Africa Region.

We thank the Director General for presenting the report on strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies and providing recommendations for the continued strengthening of WHO's capacity to prepare for, prevent and respond to emergencies.

The Africa region is prone to public health emergencies, accounting for 79% of all acute global emergencies and 59% of all protracted global emergencies reported between January and September 2021.

Additionally, these emergencies are being reported at a time when many countries in the region are experiencing epidemiological transition and are witnessing a rising burden of non-communicable diseases.

Therefore, it cannot be over-emphasized that the region needs robust surveillance and response systems to prevent and respond to public health emergencies, in addition to strong and resilient health systems to provide essential healthcare and ensure continuity of services during health emergencies.

Chair, The African Member States appreciate the support provided by WHO in strengthening Member State's ability to conduct assessments and report on national capacities to prepare for health emergencies. In relation to the IHR, we agree that gaps in the implementation of International Health Regulations (2005) still exist,

and that more effective multisectoral, multidisciplinary and transnational collaboration on preparedness and response is required at the global, regional and national levels.

We however wish to challenge the assertion in the report that suggests that a lack of timely access to high-quality pathogen specimens and genomic data remains a major barrier for the rapid development and fair and equitable deployment of safe and effective diagnostics and vaccines, which are key countermeasures for the prevention and early response to health emergencies.

On the contrary, the African Member States are of the view that opaque trade practices, intellectual property barriers, lack of technology transfer and inadequate global and regional manufacturing and supply are just some of the interrelated factors contributing to this situation.

In view of this and as stated in previous statements, we recommend that the Secretariat reconsider the model currently being trialed under the WHO BioHub System to ensure that it has inbuilt access and benefit sharing mechanisms, consistent with the provisions of existing international legal frameworks like the Nagoya Protocol.

Recognizing the need for a strong WHO to coordinate member states and to support and coordinate global health response during public health emergencies, the African Member States support the continued development of WHO's Public Health Emergency Operation Centre Network alongside the continued development of the supportive infrastructure at country level to realize this function.

Chair, Regarding agenda 15.5 on the Global Health for Peace Initiative, the Africa Region congratulates WHO for the progress made in adopting the Global Health for Peace Initiative since its launch in November 2019.

We note the numerous humanitarian emergencies occurring in several parts of the world and the devastating impact that this situation causes on people's health and on health systems.

We also concur that peace is a structural determinant of health, and therefore recognize the potential role of the Global Health for Peace Initiative in contributing to resilience and trust at the community level, as well as between populations and governments.

In this regard, the Africa Region supports the adoption of the decision proposed by Oman and Switzerland on this agenda item and requests that the Secretariat presents regular progress reports on the implementation of the Global Health for Peace Initiative, through regular reporting.

I thank you.