

**PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRD MEETING**

**WHO headquarters, Geneva  
Tuesday, 4 February 2020, scheduled at 09:00**

**Chair: Dr H. NAKATANI (Japan)**

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### THIRD MEETING

Tuesday, 4 February 2020, at 09:10

Chair: Dr H. NAKATANI (Japan)

#### **PILLAR 4: MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WHO PROVIDING BETTER SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES (continued)**

##### **1. BUDGET AND FINANCE MATTERS:** Item 21 of the agenda

##### **Programme budget 2020–2021:** Item 21.1 of the agenda (document EB146/28 Rev.1)

The CHAIR drew attention to the report contained in document EB146/28 Rev.1 and the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee contained in document EB146/3.

The representative of GERMANY, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, drew attention to paragraphs 38 to 41 of the Committee's report, which included its guidance relating to the Programme budget 2020–2021.

The representative of ZAMBIA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, was pleased with the focus on measuring WHO's impact through the accountability framework and that the responsibility was shared among the Secretariat, Members States, partners and stakeholders. Welcoming the proposed guidance, he emphasized the need to finalize the results framework for the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 and to align reporting systems across the levels of the Organization. The Secretariat should continue to engage Member States in piloting the measurement of the results framework. It should also help to strengthen national health management information systems to enable the provision of timely, reliable and actionable data to drive impact in line with the aspirations of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals.

The representative of BRAZIL said that a framework for measuring and evaluating indicators and goals was necessary to enhance transparency in WHO's collective work. Thorough and inclusive consultations should be held with Member States and regional offices to ensure that the tool remained viable and truly helpful in the collective effort to promote the right to health worldwide. Comprehensive case studies and pilot measurement initiatives should be used to adapt the framework to national contexts and priorities, particularly those of developing countries. It was hoped that the new results framework would support the measures taken by low- and middle-income countries to strengthen their reporting capacities, integrating and catalysing methodologies in the output scorecard, to promote health.

The representative of SRI LANKA, acknowledging that WHO had mobilized higher quality resources through strategic dialogue with partners, expressed concern regarding the underfunding of the noncommunicable diseases and health emergencies programmes. The Programme budget utilization rate for the current biennium was projected to reach about 90%, with implementation plans aligned with available and projected funding; however, the rate for special programmes was below average. Flexible funds needed to be closely monitored to ensure their deployment to underfunded priority areas. The Regional Office for South-East Asia relied entirely on flexible funding and voluntary contributions for its base programme financing, with donor interest remaining highly focused on disease-specific areas of

work, especially communicable diseases. The Programme budget 2020–2021 had increased by 11% compared to the previous budget, with more funding for the base Programme budget. He called for WHO's top 15 contributors, who had provided more than 70% of the funds, to maintain their financing at the current level, and for further efforts to increase resource mobilization to expand the contributor base.

The representative of CHILE, speaking also on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Norway, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, welcomed the commitment to integrate human rights, equity and gender equality across the programme areas, as articulated in output 4.2.6. That integration was in line with WHO's commitments under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), which included several indicators that were relevant to the budget and planning framework. Meeting those commitments required strong and visible senior management leadership, engagement, adequate resourcing, and accountability across all three levels of the Organization. The integration of gender equality, equity and rights as an assessment parameter in the balanced scorecard would require additional human and financial resources. He asked the Secretariat to provide an update on how it would ensure that such resources were available at all three levels of the Organization, and to publish its data on all the indicators under UN-SWAP to ensure full transparency with the Executive Board and Health Assembly. As 2020 marked the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, it was an appropriate time for WHO to recommit to the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and to address the other drivers of inequality to achieve universal health coverage for all.

The representative of TONGA expressed appreciation for the update on the results framework and said that she looked forward to the further strengthening of accountability mechanisms. While the measurement of the country-level impact of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work and regular monitoring of joint efforts were welcome, data collection could prove resource-intensive for many Member States, especially small island developing States. Regarding the results framework, the Secretariat should: focus on supporting comprehensive health system improvement, not just data collection; consider the reporting burden on Member States and avoid duplication; and clarify the methodology of the output scorecard and how to provide qualitative country case studies, as needed. The Secretariat's support in helping Member States to strengthen partnerships with tertiary research institutions to improve health systems, especially health information and research, would reinforce the results framework initiative. Lastly, the leadership of the Director-General and the Secretariat in their commitment to the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, 2020, was highly commended.

The representative of JAPAN underlined the proposed guidance contained in subparagraph 41(c) of the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, relating to the Programme budget 2020–2021. A feasible monitoring method needed to be implemented without imposing an additional burden on Member States. In that regard, the decision to align the universal health coverage index with the existing indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals was appreciated. He looked forward to participating in further constructive discussions between the Secretariat and Member States regarding the indicators.

The representative of SUDAN, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that the measurement of the Secretariat's performance through the output scorecard system was very promising and should inspire higher expectations from Member States. The Secretariat should to continue working with Member States, national statistics offices and other partners to empower countries to analyse, interpret and track progress, thereby making maximum use of their

data. It was critical that Secretariat should continue refining the output scorecard to ensure a balance between feasibility and credibility. Member States should be consulted before the results framework was finalized and presented to the Health Assembly.

The representative of BANGLADESH, expressing support for the 46 outcome indicators for impact measurement, requested that indicators for global nutrition targets be included, space permitting. Particular attention needed to be paid on the output scorecard for measuring at country level given the challenges of collecting, analysing and interpreting country-level data where there was no interoperability. She fully supported the proposed guidance on the Programme budget 2020–2021 and requested the strengthening of measurement and accountability across the Organization, using an integrated approach.

The representative of FINLAND, speaking also on behalf of Denmark, France, Iceland, Lithuania, Monaco, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, welcomed the proposed guidance on the Programme budget 2020–2021. In principle, the results framework was a positive approach; however, the health outcome component needed to be developed further with experts from Member States to resolve outstanding methodological challenges. She was concerned that only a limited number of Member States would be able to provide data on all indicators, with estimates being used for the remainder. Work using estimates must be completely transparent. Noting that the report did not mention how the data would be processed, she requested the Secretariat to provide an extensive description of the planned processes, including the role of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. She asked whether using indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals would produce results that were different from measures at the United Nations level. In the interest of upholding public trust in WHO data and analyses, it would be prudent to clearly distinguish the outcome component of the results framework from WHO's epidemiology-based measurements. If successful, the output scorecard would set a valuable example within the United Nations system. However, how the objectives were reflected in the work of country offices, and the relevance of outputs to countries with no country office, required clarification. She strongly supported the proposed guidance on taking a stepwise approach to rolling out the results framework, including piloting the framework in different countries.

The representative of ARGENTINA said that the percentage of assessed contributions to be used to deliver the Thirteenth General Programme of Work was low and that the distribution of funds must be improved. Regarding the four pillars of the resource mobilization strategic framework for 2019–2023, Member States should be consulted on innovative financing mechanisms. The donor base required urgent diversification; however, the participation of contributors, who were often considered “partners who guide WHO's work”, must be subject to the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors. With respect to funding from philanthropic bodies, she agreed that further information should be sought regarding the creation of an independent foundation in support of WHO.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Data, Analytics and Delivery for Impact) welcomed the constructive feedback from Member States on the results framework, in particular impact measurement for the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. The Secretariat would continue to report in a transparent and inclusive manner on its progress regarding impact measurement, which was based on the Sustainable Development Goals, including indicators 3.8.1 and 3.8.2. As significant gaps and weaknesses in data and health information systems gaps persisted, investment and a comprehensive data and health information system were urgently needed. To close such gaps, the Secretariat was prepared to build on innovations developed by Member States and planned to work with national statistics organizations, health ministries and registrar-generals' offices. Regarding estimates, the Secretariat took data protection seriously and did not share or disseminate data from Member States externally. Estimates produced by the Secretariat would be grounded in robust data principles and transparency, and developed in close collaboration with Member States to provide reliable, timely and actionable data.

The Secretariat would continue to support and work with Member States, including by piloting the results framework and impact measurement in 24 countries. The Secretariat would assess the results, address gaps in data and report back to Member States.

The DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL said that the Secretariat had been mainstreaming gender, equity and human rights into all its policies and strategies. Progress in that area had also been facilitated by the use of balanced scorecards. The Secretariat would ensure that all data relating to the Sustainable Development Goals would be used for the impact framework in order to avoid duplication and minimize the reporting burden on Member States. Furthermore, the Secretariat would use every opportunity to strengthen national health information systems. She encouraged Member States to approve the impact framework during the Seventy-third World Health Assembly so that implementation could begin, noting that some outstanding issues, such as estimates, could be addressed in collaboration with Member States to find the best way forward. Lastly, she assured Member States that the Secretariat would retain careful guardianship of their data.

**The Board noted the report contained in document EB146/28 Rev.1 and concurred with the Committee's guidance in respect of the Programme budget 2020–2021.**

**Financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2018–2019 and outlook on financing of the Programme budget 2020–2021:** Item 21.2 of the agenda (documents EB146/29 and EB146/30)

The CHAIR drew attention to the reports contained in documents EB146/29 and EB146/30, and the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee contained in Document EB146/3.

The representative of GERMANY, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, drew attention to paragraphs 42 to 51 of the Committee's report, which included its guidance relating to the financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2020–2021 and the WHO resource mobilization strategy.

The representative of ZAMBIA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, welcomed the improved level of financing of all major offices under the Programme budget 2018–2019 and applauded the use of best practices and lessons learned, including strategic resource allocation to fund major offices and programmes and the strategic dialogue with partners to mobilize quality resources. Regarding the Programme budget 2020–2021, he was pleased that the utilization rate was projected to reach about 90% and welcomed the 11% increase in the base component compared to the previous biennium. He applauded the prioritization of polio eradication and tropical disease research, as well as the reintroduction of a budget line for WHO emergency operations and appeals. He welcomed the resource mobilization strategy and urged the Secretariat to strengthen and expand the engagement of donors, stakeholders and Member States. The Secretariat should mobilize more flexible and predictable funding and ensure equitable distribution of those funds across programmes and major offices, particularly at the country level. He called on the Secretariat to implement the guidance of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, as set out in its report.

The representative of JAPAN commended the Secretariat's efforts to address the uneven funding referred to in the Committee's report with respect to the Programme budget 2018–2019 and Programme budget 2020–2021. He was also pleased that available funding for the base programmes in 2018–2019 stood at 103%. With regard to resource mobilization, it was essential to expand the pool of donors in order to implement the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. Furthermore, he supported the Committee's guidance on engaging in timely and thorough consultations with Member States on the proposal to establish a WHO foundation, prior to the governing body meetings in May 2020, and

providing sufficient information on the foundation, including its nature, its eventual relationship with WHO, and measures to advance the interests of WHO and safeguard the Organization's reputation. He asked the Secretariat to brief Member States on the matter, including on how new donors would be secured.

The representative of BANGLADESH commended WHO on its implementation of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. Strategic partnerships between Member States, non-State actors and the Secretariat would be pivotal in obtaining the funding needed for its delivery. She welcomed the steps taken by the Secretariat to increase funding and improve its quality, predictability and flexibility with the view of promoting health, keeping the world safe and serving the vulnerable. The Secretariat was encouraged to monitor implementation of the resource mobilization strategy and regularly report on key milestones. She expressed support for the Committee's guidance, as set out in its report.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA welcomed the Committee's guidance, which was a good starting point for a more comprehensive approach to resource mobilization. Budgetary funding needed to be more flexible, predictable and sustainable. It was hoped that the implementation of the mobilization strategy would help to expand the donor base, including at the country level, and to build more effective partnerships. More information would be helpful on innovative financing and revenue-generating activities, such the WHO foundation. She noted that the collaboration between donors and staff members regarding voluntary contributions was not always aligned with WHO's overall resource mobilization strategy.

The representative of the CZECH REPUBLIC<sup>1</sup> welcomed the Committee's guidance on strengthening and expanding resource mobilization activities at regional and country levels, providing adequate and targeted resources through collaboration with Member States and in line with country support plans. Her Government stood ready to increase funding to the WHO country office in the Czech Republic to strengthen its capacities.

The representative of THAILAND<sup>1</sup> requested the Secretariat to provide information on the trend of flexible funds over the previous 10 years. He noted that programme support costs would be covered mostly earmarked funds and were therefore not flexible. He also expressed concern about the declining proportion of assessed contributions, and the fact that WHO had grown to depend on a small number of major donors, not all of whom were Member States, in the previous 30 years.

The representative of SWITZERLAND<sup>1</sup> said that since more than 50% of WHO's voluntary contributions came from a small number of major donors, a new, coordinated and centralized approach to resource mobilization was required. She therefore welcomed the four pillars of the resource mobilization strategic framework for 2019–2023.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Business Operations) said that the Secretariat was working to resolve pockets of poverty by looking at ways to improve the strategic use and equitable distribution of flexible funding. Dialogue with donors would also lead to better quality funding. The Secretariat was actively engaged in the United Nations funding compact, reported back to entities of United Nations system as well as to WHO's Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, Executive Board and Health Assembly, including on flexible funding. It would also begin reporting on efficiency gains. He said that part of WHO's resource mobilization strategy was to ensure uniform implementation throughout the entire Organization.

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<sup>1</sup> Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

The EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (External Relations and Governance) said that the Secretariat fully accepted and would act on the proposed guidance. Issues relating to equitable and flexible funding of programmes also applied to staff alignment issues, particularly with respect to staff members working in traditionally underfunded areas. She welcomed the interest in and support for the resource mobilization strategy and the WHO foundation as means of diversifying the donor base. The Secretariat would consult with Member States regarding the proposed foundation, in line with the Committee's guidance.

**The Board noted the reports contained in documents EB146/29 and EB146/30 and concurred with the Committee's guidance in respect of the financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2020–2021 and the WHO resource mobilization strategy.**

## **2. GOVERNANCE MATTERS: Item 22 of the agenda**

### **Engagement with non-State actors: Item 22.2 of the agenda**

- **Report on the implementation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors** (document EB146/34)
- **Non-State actors in official relations with WHO** (document EB146/35 and EB146/35 Add.1)

The CHAIR invited the Board to consider the reports contained in documents EB146/34, EB146/35, EB146/35 Add.1 and EB146/38 Add.2. He also drew attention to a draft decision contained in document EB146/35 on non-State actors in official relations with WHO, the financial and administrative implications of which were set out in document EB146/35 Add.1, and to the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee contained in document EB146/3.

The representative of GERMANY, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, drew attention to paragraphs 52 to 57 of the Committee's report, which included its guidance in respect of engagement with non-State actors.

The representative of BRAZIL said that health would be promoted through networks for dialogue, cooperation and collaboration. Reliable mechanisms for collaboration with non-State actors should be based on a culture of risk management and were fundamental to improving WHO's initiatives in line with intergovernmental priorities, particularly in view of challenges such as rising prices of medicines, new health emergencies and organizational changes within WHO. He strongly encouraged WHO to increase its efforts to consolidate the Register of non-State actors, highlighting the Committee's guidance on proceeding promptly to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 42 to 47 of document EB146/38 Add.2, paying particular attention to recommendations 1, 4 and 6, and on enhancing the range and quality of information available in the WHO Register of non-State actors, and enhance its usability. Following such guidance would help to ensure a coherent approach to due diligence and evaluation of non-State actors interested in working with WHO. The Secretariat should provide a management response to the initial evaluation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors and report regularly on the implementation of the recommendations from the evaluation.

The representative of TAJIKISTAN thanked the Secretariat for the report contained in document EB146/35, as it was focused on promoting more effective work between WHO and non-State actors in official relations with the Organization.

The representative of ESWATINI, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that vital work had been carried out by the African Region's country offices in implementing the Framework. However, a clear and comprehensive strategy and implementation plan for the Framework should be developed and disseminated to Member States and at all levels of WHO. All relevant stakeholders needed to work together to implement and promote the Framework, and the Secretariat should report regularly through the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and Executive Board. The budgetary implications of implementing the Framework were particularly challenging for certain African countries owing to ongoing emergencies. He noted that the lack of financial and human resources at some country offices was impeding the proper implementation of the simplified procedures for emergency situations. He therefore urged the Secretariat to mobilize resources for regional and country offices.

The representative of ARGENTINA said that her Government recognized the need to interact with nongovernmental organizations, philanthropic foundations and academic institutions, particularly in WHO's strategic areas of activity, and was pleased that regional offices had been implementing the Framework. However, there was a need for a comprehensive, practical and viable strategy to fully implement the Framework and for better communication with Member States with regard to implementation. She underscored the Committee's guidance contained in subparagraphs (a), (c) and (g) relating to engagement with non-State actors.

The representative of SUDAN said that constraints on financial and technical resources in the Eastern Mediterranean Region made it necessary to increase the engagement of non-State actors, which was key to the WHO transformation agenda. Speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, he welcomed the report contained in document EB146/34.

Speaking in his capacity as the representative of Sudan, he said that his Government fully supported the Secretariat's efforts to align the functions of its specialized unit responsible for due diligence and risk assessment with those responsible for compliance, risk management and ethics. He strongly encouraged the Secretariat to take all necessary actions to strengthen implementation of the Framework, establish a coordinated implementation strategy and plan for the Framework that were sponsored at a sufficiently senior level to secure endorsement and buy-in across the three levels of WHO, raise awareness and improve communication about the Framework among WHO staff members and bring strong management and change management knowledge, skills and experience to bear on the Framework's implementation. More robust and flexible approaches to due diligence and risk assessment at all levels of the Organization were also welcome.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA underlined the importance of the Register of non-State actors, which should be a usable tool for WHO staff members, Member States and non-State actors. The Register should contain data on both non-State actors in official relations with WHO and all others with whom WHO engaged. She noted that there were different practices in due diligence across the United Nations system as well long-standing partnerships between certain agencies and the private sector. Such partnerships were an integral part of advancing in sustainable development, and United Nations agencies including WHO needed to make a proactive effort to establish them, especially since they enjoyed flexibility in choosing partnerships that were best suited for achieving shared objectives.



The representative of THAILAND<sup>1</sup> said that WHO should strongly advocate for transparent collaboration between non-State and State actors on the principle of participatory governance. To ensure the success and sustainability of health programmes, WHO should facilitate the development of platforms through which non-State and State actors could collectively manage such programmes, in particular those related to the “triple billion” goals. It was hoped that the six recommendations from the initial evaluation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors would lead to tangible outcomes in the Framework’s implementation.

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION<sup>1</sup> said that her Government welcomed all the recommendations made by the WHO Evaluation Office and guidance proposed by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee. She called on the Secretariat to report to Member States on the progress made in implementing the Framework, in particular regarding the use of technology.

The representative of NEW ZEALAND<sup>1</sup> said that the Framework was particularly important in the context of the WHO transformation agenda. The Secretariat should focus on finding the best way to mobilize resources and on working with various partners while protecting the integrity and strengthening the credibility of the Organization. Her Government would be paying particular attention to the implementation of Recommendation 6 of the initial evaluation of the Framework, on developing, finalizing and implementing an engagement strategy with non-State actors. Implementing this recommendation would be essential in many areas of work, including efforts to address the risk factors for noncommunicable diseases, which involved diverse stakeholder groups.

The representative of the INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURERS AND ASSOCIATIONS, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR and also on behalf of the Global Diagnostic Imaging, Healthcare IT and Radiation Therapy Trade Association and World Self-Medication Industry, said that she welcomed the Director-General’s positive comments regarding the contribution of the private sector to the development and attainment of global health objectives. Health care industries, in partnership with the public sector and other actors, were looking to make significant strides in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The Executive Board should encourage further collaboration with health care industries and ensure that the Framework’s guidelines enabled productive engagement. In that regard, she called for increased clarity on WHO’s approach to policy consultation with non-State actors and on its criteria for selecting experts for advisory and working groups.

The representative of MEDICUS MUNDI INTERNATIONAL, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, said that Member States should ensure that the Framework was managed and monitored according to principles of transparency and accountability to avoid conflicts of interest. Although progress had been made in developing the Register of non-State actors, further information was needed on the nature of interactions between those actors and WHO. The Organization’s reporting on due diligence lacked the transparency and detail required to make an informed assessment of the Framework’s implementation. WHO should therefore publish the outcomes of its 1500 due diligence discussions, the content of the simplified assessment procedure for new engagements and the outcomes of its discussions with non-State actors to reinforce the Organization’s normative mandate. She expressed concern about nil-remuneration contracts, which would provide an opportunity to bypass the restrictions placed on secondments for private sector entities. Lastly, the Secretariat and Member States should revisit the definition of conflicts of interest to distinguish between civil society, for which health was a right and public good, and the private sector, for which health was a commercial good.

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<sup>1</sup> Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

The EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (External Relations and Governance) thanked representatives for their contributions. The Secretariat accepted the Committee's guidance in respect of engagement with non-State actors. It had been asked to pay close attention to certain issues, including on resourcing, and she recalled that the Chef de Cabinet had addressed that important matter during the Committee's consideration of the accountability and business integrity function. The Board's discussions had served to illustrate the importance of the Framework.

**The Board noted the reports contained in documents EB146/34, EB146/35, EB146/35 Add.1 and EB146/38 Add.2, and concurred with the Committee's guidance in respect of engagement with non-State actors.**

The CHAIR took it that the Executive Board wished to adopt the draft decision in document EB146/35.

**The decision was adopted.<sup>1</sup>**

### **3. MANAGEMENT MATTERS:** Item 23 of the agenda (continued)

**Evaluation: update and proposed workplan for 2020–2021:** Item 23.1 of the agenda (documents EB146/38 and EB146/38/Add.1) (continued from the second meeting, section 6)

The CHAIR drew attention to the reports contained in documents EB146/38 and EB146/38 Add.1 and to the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board contained in document EB146/3.

The representative of GERMANY, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, drew attention to paragraphs 58 to 63 of the Committee's report, which included its proposed guidance in respect of the evaluation update and proposed workplan for 2020–2021.

The representative of the UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, commended the valuable work of the Evaluation Office. She noted the key evaluation activities undertaken and expressed satisfaction that the Office was involved in managing evaluations with other United Nations agencies. She was pleased that decentralized evaluations were being conducted by regional or country offices, which was consistent with the spirit of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work and the WHO transformation agenda. The proposed evaluation of the HIV/AIDS framework for action in the African Region, 2016–2020 should be expanded to include targets and interventions of the African Union, and ministers for health should also be involved in the evaluation process. She supported the guidance proposed by the Committee.

The representative of TONGA commended the progress made in implementing the WHO evaluation policy and particularly welcomed the review of 40 years of primary health care implementation at country level. She fully supported the process followed and the proposed evaluation workplan.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision EB146(2).

The REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Evaluation and Organizational Learning) thanked members of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee for their guidance and Board members for their support. The suggestion of the Member States of the African Region on including African Union targets and engaging ministers of health in the proposed evaluation of the HIV/AIDS framework for action in the African Region, 2016–2020 would be taken into consideration.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to note the reports contained in documents EB146/38 and EB146/38 Add.1, and approve the Organization-wide evaluation workplan for 2020–2021.

**It was so agreed.**

**The Board concurred with the Committee's guidance in respect of the evaluation update and proposed workplan for 2020–2021.**

(For continuation of the discussion, see the summary record of the fourth meeting, section 4).

**Update on the Infrastructure Fund:** Item 23.3 of the agenda

- **Information management and technology** (document EB146/40)
- **Geneva buildings renovation strategy** (documents EB146/40, EB146/41 and EB146/41 Add.1)

The CHAIR invited the Board to consider the reports contained in documents EB146/40 and EB146/41, and the draft decision contained in document EB146/41, the financial and administrative implications of which were set out in document EB146/41 Add.1. He drew attention to the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee contained in document EB146/3.

The representative of GERMANY, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, drew attention to paragraphs 64 to 71 of the Committee's report, which included its guidance in respect of information management and technology and the Geneva buildings renovation strategy.

The representative of the UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, welcomed the development of initiatives such as the integrated digital platform, cloud-based applications and the cybersecurity programme, and noted with satisfaction that the revised strategy on information management and technology had been aligned with the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. She supported the establishment of a governance structure and a committee to oversee information and technology integration platforms across regions. Special attention should be given to the African Region, whose digital architecture lagged behind that of other regions, and she trusted that cultural changes would be taken into account to ensure that workers could adjust to the new technologies associated with the digitalization of WHO. Turning to the Geneva buildings renovation strategy, she expressed appreciation to the authorities of the Canton of Geneva for the provision of a vehicular entrance to headquarters, which would increase security, and noted that the adjustments to the building would be completed within the original approved budget. She supported adoption of the draft decision and the Committee's guidance.

The representative of JAPAN noted with satisfaction that the Geneva buildings renovation strategy was progressing well. As the project was expected to be completed within the previously

approved budget, he sought clarification of paragraph 3 of the draft decision, which would permit the Secretariat to increase the approved budget for the renovation by up to 10% before seeking the approval of the Health Assembly.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA noted with satisfaction that the Geneva buildings renovation strategy was proceeding on time and within budget. Her Government welcomed WHO's efforts to digitalize, which would bring long-standing benefits to all aspects of the Organization's work and facilitate innovations in health. The United States was pleased that the progress was being made within the limits of the information technology component of the Infrastructure Fund.

The representative of NORWAY,<sup>1</sup> referring to the Committee's guidance, sought clarification of the practical implications of continuing the development of cloud-based technology and ensuring that such technology was fit for purpose at all levels of the Organization.

The representative of ECUADOR<sup>1</sup> welcomed the progress made in the area of information management and technology. Digital technologies had an important role in health systems and data collection and would facilitate resource optimization, access to information, streamlined institutional procedures and improved decision-making. Future programmes and initiatives should focus on such areas as cybersecurity, the global management system, customer relationship management and digitalization of guidelines. Health information systems and emergency management plans should provide for the use of mobile platforms and applications to build capacity to tackle future challenges. Projects for the innovation and development of health information systems should reflect the targets and objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Business Operations), thanking representatives for their support, said that the Geneva buildings renovation strategy was on time and budget. The figure of 10% in paragraph 3 of the draft decision had been included in the original decision of the Health Assembly to provide for some flexibility during the project's implementation. There was no expectation that the previously approved budget would have to be exceeded. To ensure that cloud-based technology was fit for purpose at all levels of the Organization, efforts would be made to ensure that the platforms were accessible in all contexts, including in low-bandwidth locations. Work undertaken in other United Nations agencies was being leveraged to increase WHO's capability in the area of cybersecurity.

**The Board noted the reports contained in documents EB146/40 and EB146/41 and concurred with the Committee's guidance in respect of information management and technology and the Geneva buildings renovation strategy.**

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to adopt the draft decision contained in document EB146/41.

**The decision was adopted.<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

<sup>2</sup> Decision EB146(3).

**4. STAFFING MATTERS:** Item 25 of the agenda (continued)

**Statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations:** Item 25.3 of the agenda (document EB146/INF./1)

The CHAIR drew attention to the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee contained in document EB146/3.

The representative of the WHO STAFF ASSOCIATIONS, speaking on behalf of the staff associations of WHO, PAHO, UNAIDS and IARC, said that, while the matching and mapping of staff members to headquarters positions, as part of the WHO transformation agenda, had been completed transparently and fairly, the process had been rushed at the end, and there remained issues that would need to be addressed in the months ahead. The new structure at headquarters should be monitored in a fair and transparent manner to ensure that any issues that arose could be resolved quickly and in the best interests of both staff members and WHO as a whole.

Although the work being undertaken to revise the policy on sexual harassment and violence was a positive development, there was also an urgent need to revise the policy on harassment and bullying, since tackling all forms of harassment was a priority for WHO.

There were still a number of issues that had to be addressed with regard to the mobility policy, including: management needed to ensure that staff members who were moved were still working in posts where their specific skillsets would best serve WHO's needs; staff members' specific life circumstances should be taken into account when considering exceptions to the mandatory mobility policy; and data should be provided, for review by the Director-General, on the number of staff eligible for mobility, number of staff in hardship duty stations and preferred destinations, and the review should be made public in the spirit of ethics, accountability and transparency.

The representative of GERMANY, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, drew attention to paragraphs 23 to 27 of the Committee's report, which included its guidance in respect of the statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations.

The representative of BURKINA FASO, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, welcomed WHO's constructive dialogue with the staff associations and encouraged both staff members and senior management to continue to work together towards WHO's objectives. The Director-General and other members of senior management should continue to pay attention to key issues of concern to staff, particularly global geographical mobility, all forms of harassment, the WHO transformation agenda, the International Civil Service Commission, universal health insurance for all staff members and the implementation of a mental health policy across WHO.

The representative of JAPAN expressed support for the Committee's proposed guidance in respect of the statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations, particularly the guidance contained in subparagraph 27 (e) regarding the continued focus on the implementation of the transformation agenda with clear communication and consultation with staff

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL, reiterating his comments from previous Board sessions, said that no distinction should be made between management and staff, since they all contributed to achieving the same goals. In order to promote respect among staff and enhance staff engagement, management was committed to fostering openness within WHO through initiatives such as the open-door policy, monthly meetings with the staff association at headquarters and bi-monthly meetings with regional staff associations. Those initiatives had been worthwhile: the open-door policy helped not only to resolve

individual problems and grievances but also to identify and address underlying systemic and structural issues, and agreement had been reached on all but one of the 10 issues raised at the first monthly staff association meeting.

In line with the Board's recommendation to speed up the transformation agenda, a travel ban had been put in place in November and December 2019 to meet the end-of-year deadline for completion of the design phase. Although the process of matching and mapping staff to headquarter positions had been accelerated, the system of checks and balances had remained in place. Staff members had been able to address their concerns to the relevant Ad Hoc Review Committee and to the Transparency and Fairness Committee. That system meant that there had been very few complaints about the process.

Going forward, the Director-General was committed to ensuring transparency and openness in all staff relations and to involving staff in all key discussions and decision-making processes. Furthermore, it was important for WHO to serve as a role model by fostering a healthy work environment. In 2020, the focus would therefore be on minimizing stress, promoting staff well-being and improving staff members' work-life balance, while also increasing productivity.

**The Board noted the statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations and concurred with the Committee's guidance in respect of the statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations.**

**Report of the Ombudsman:** Item 25.4 of the agenda (documents EB146/INF./2 and EB146/INF./3)

The CHAIR drew attention to the reports contained in documents EB146/INF./2 and EB146/INF./3, and to the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee contained in document EB146/3.

The OMBUDSMAN, speaking on behalf of all WHO ombudsmen, drew the Board's attention to two systemic issues that formed the basis for his recommended actions, which had been endorsed by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee. First, a change in mindset could not be achieved by simply proclaiming the new principles identified in the WHO Values Charter; current practices should be re-evaluated to assess and correct potential negative impacts. Second, the existing mechanisms for the reassignment of staff members in untenable situations were time-consuming and inefficient, partly due to financial considerations; a new mechanism should be established with clear roles and adequate funding. However, those systemic issues should not be viewed in isolation; they required a holistic approach, with particular attention given to the strengthening of managerial skills and career management, and the value of recognition. Although efforts were under way to address those issues, there was ample room for improvement. Without effective action on the previous recommendations, new problems would continue to arise. Lastly, he stressed that the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services at WHO headquarters did not have a supervisory role vis-à-vis regional ombudsmen, who reported to their respective regional directors. However, it did provide the regional ombudsmen with guidance and would seek to improve collaboration within the network and support the ombudsmen in reporting to their respective regional committees.

The representative of GERMANY, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, drew the Board's attention to paragraphs 28 to 32 of the Committee's report, which included its guidance relating to the report of the Ombudsman.

The representative of BURKINA FASO, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, welcomed the reports and expressed appreciation for the work of the Ombudsman. Noting the actions recommended to set WHO on the path to a new corporate culture, he agreed that it was particularly important for senior management to set an example by upholding the values of the new corporate culture, and to promote staff members' adherence to those new values. The issue of the

reassignment of staff members in untenable situations also needed urgent attention. Although efforts to implement the previous recommendations of the Ombudsman were commendable, the Secretariat needed to address the issues identified in the various management policies. In addition, it was necessary to support the ombudsmen, both at headquarters and in the regions; harmonize the role; and ensure that it remained independent. Implementing the actions recommended by the Ombudsman would create a good working environment, improve staff performance and accelerate the transformation of the Organization.

**The Board noted the report contained in document EB146/INF./2 and concurred with the Committee's guidance in respect of the report of the Ombudsman.**

**Human resources: update:** Item 25.5 of the agenda (document EB146/48 Rev.1)

The CHAIR drew attention to the report contained in document EB146/48 Rev. 1 and the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee contained in document EB146/3.

The representative of GERMANY, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, drew the Board's attention to paragraphs 16 to 22 of the Committee's report, which included its guidance related to the human resources update.

The representative of BRAZIL highlighted the importance of a motivated, effective workforce in allowing the Organization to fulfil its role and make progress on the ambitious objectives established by Member States. While acknowledging the quality of WHO's work on recruitment, retaining talent and promoting equality and a safe working environment, he expressed concern regarding the limited increase in the proportion of staff in the professional and higher categories from developing countries and the lack of growth in the percentage of under- or unrepresented Member States. He therefore supported the guidance proposed by the Committee, particularly in relation to achieving equitable geographical representation among staff.

The representative of BENIN, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, welcomed the efforts made to improve gender balance within the Organization, including initiatives for building the capacities of women, and to create an enabling working environment to protect staff members from all forms of harassment and promote their health and well-being. However, further work was needed to improve the representation of under- or unrepresented Member States, notably by considering the overall organizational design and elements such as staff recruitment, the internship programme and training at country level, which would also support implementation of the new operating model.

The representative of JAPAN commended the improvement in gender balance and the efforts made regarding capacity-building and the promotion of health among staff members. He expressed support for the Committee's guidance, noting the importance of cultural diversity among staff members and stressing the need for greater efforts to secure equitable geographical representation. Following WHO reform, special consideration should be given to candidates from under-represented countries during the internal recruitment phase, and through employment missions and active efforts to hire interns from those countries. While welcoming the move to provide stipends to interns under certain circumstances, he requested further details on how that change was being funded.

The representative of SUDAN highlighted the potential reputational and legal risks to WHO of using consultants and individuals on agreements for performance of work. Certain individuals under investigation or being prosecuted for serious crimes in Sudan had been recruited under such contracts,

which was objectionable in terms of both the national impact and the reputational risk for the Organization. It was unlikely that those individuals would have been recruited through the standard WHO recruitment process, which had been strengthened and was now sufficiently rigorous. In order to ensure the strong reputation of WHO, greater due diligence was therefore required for the local or international recruitment of individuals on agreements for performance of work, rather than the simple declaration of interests currently used.

**The meeting rose at 12:30.**

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