

## **World health days**

### **Report by the Director-General**

1. The Executive Board at its 144th session considered document EB144/39 Rev.1 on world health days and agreed that the Secretariat would finalize a study on the cost-effectiveness of and guidance for world health days, and would produce a feasible proposal for consideration at a future session of the Executive Board.<sup>1</sup>

2. Of the 104 world days, weeks, years and decades devoted to health, 11 of them are health-related anniversaries officially mandated by WHO's Member States, while of the other 93 anniversaries, under the auspices of other United Nations entities or other stakeholders, many are aligned with the priorities of the Member States, the Secretariat and partners and may require some level of advocacy and communications support. Recognizing this, and bearing in mind that, based on epidemiological data, some world health days are more pertinent to specific WHO regions than to others, the Secretariat proposes, in conducting the study, to:

- (a) consider whether world health days, weeks, years or decades devoted to specific health topics play a useful role in driving and attaining programmatic (technical), policy, behavioural and Member State actions and other important goals;
- (b) consider the advocacy and communication strategies employed by the Secretariat to publicize and promote specific health topics, analysing them and the resources used; and use the analysis in order to identify the essential prerequisites for Secretariat input to ensure that advocacy work through world health days is effective, thus enabling the appropriate recommendations to be presented to Member States for their consideration;
- (c) address the lack of clarity with regard to the specific obligations of the WHO Secretariat for officially recognized world health days, weeks, years or decades;
- (d) identify criteria for reviewing the current list and for reviewing future suggestions for world health days, weeks, years or decades.

3. In addition, world health days or weeks could be linked to the implementation of WHO's General Programme of Work. This would allow Member States and the Organization to prioritize topics; identify goals; determine the appropriate level of effort in terms of advocacy and communications; identify clear criteria for suggesting new health days, weeks, years or decades to the Executive Board; and discuss potential time limits for officially observed health days, weeks, years or decades.

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<sup>1</sup> See document EB144/2019/REC/2, summary records of the fourteenth meeting, section 1.

4. The Secretariat proposes to undertake a review of world health days, weeks, years or decades, including through consultations with Member States, based on the approach outlined in paragraph 1, and to submit the study on assessing the added value of, and guidance for, world health days to the Executive Board at its 148th session.

#### **ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

5. The Board is invited to note the report and provide comments on the Secretariat's proposed approach to preparing a study on added value of, and guidance for, world health days, weeks, years or decades. In particular:

- (a) Do Member States agree with the proposed approach outlined in paragraph 1(a) to (d) above?
- (b) Are there other considerations that Member States would like to raise?

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