

**PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SIXTH MEETING**

**WHO headquarters, Geneva  
Wednesday, 20 January 2021, scheduled at 14:00**

**Chair: Dr H. VARDHAN (India)  
later: Mr B. KÜMMEL (Germany)  
later: Dr H. VARDHAN (India)**

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## SIXTH MEETING

Wednesday, 20 January 2021, at 14:15

**Chair:** Dr H. VARDHAN (India)

**later:** Mr B. KÜMMEL (Germany)

**later:** Dr H. VARDHAN (India)

### 1. **REPORT OF THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:** Item 4 of the agenda (document EB148/5)

The CHAIR reminded the Board that, in addition to discussing matters that fell under its mandate, the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board had also issued concrete guidance on specific items on the agenda of the current session of the Board. The Board would be invited to consider the Committee's recommendations on each relevant item as it came under discussion by the Board.

The representative of TUNISIA, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, said that the Committee had welcomed the work of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee, in particular in the areas of cybersecurity, fraud prevention and the mental health of WHO staff. It had expressed support for the establishment of an independent commission to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse and the hiring of an external company to conduct fact-finding regarding allegations of such behaviour in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Committee had expressed appreciation for the two-stage approach to the preparation of the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023. It had supported the four key areas of strategic focus but had emphasized the need for WHO to strengthen its enabling functions and had requested a breakdown of how the proposed increase in the base segment would be allocated to WHO regions and countries. It had welcomed the continued prioritization of the transition of poliomyelitis (polio) assets, as well as efforts to update budget projections to reflect the extended polio eradication timeline. The Committee had expressed support for a sustainable financing approach that first identified the critical functions of the Organization and costed them and then identified appropriate sources of funding. It had urged the Secretariat to take corrective measures to address challenges related to implementation of the Programme budget 2020–2021 at the country level and to maintain the strong implementation of planned activities. In addition, the Committee had recommended that consideration of the proposed scale of assessments for 2022–2023 and the status of assessed contributions should be deferred to its thirty-fourth meeting. He also outlined the Committee's guidance on the WHO transformation agenda, the mobility policy, gender parity and geographical representation among WHO staff, human resources policies and implementation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors.

The representative of BANGLADESH emphasized the importance of implementing the recommendations issued by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and welcomed the progress made in that regard. The proposal to establish a working group on sustainable financing was welcome. He accepted the rationale for the two-stage approach to the preparation of the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023, the proposed budget increase and the proposed extension of the date for achievement of the "triple billion" targets under the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025. He requested the Secretariat to provide updates on the implementation status of the recommendations issued by the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee, including any

challenges faced during the implementation process, as well as information on the steps the Secretariat would take to overcome funding gaps in the implementation of the WHO transformation strategy at the country level. He called for improved geographical representation from unrepresented and underrepresented countries and requested the Secretariat to keep Member States informed of the development of the diversity and inclusion strategy for the WHO workforce.

The representative of GHANA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, commended the Secretariat's active engagement with Member States in the development of the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023. The Secretariat should keep countries and people at the centre of all decisions and allocate the largest proportion of budgetary resources to country-level programmes to enable country offices to address the huge gaps in capacity. With regard to sustainable financing, Member States should align their expectations of the Organization with the level of resources provided. He requested the timely publication of governing bodies documents to allow adequate time for their review.

The representative of MEXICO<sup>1</sup> welcomed the recommendations issued by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and expressed his Government's willingness to participate in the proposed working group on sustainable financing.

**The Board noted the report.**

The CHAIR invited the Board to consider a draft decision on preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment proposed by Australia, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America, which read:

The Executive Board, taking into account the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board,<sup>2</sup>

Noting the standards that WHO Member States require all international organizations to adhere to relating to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and their shared zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, as well as for inaction in relation to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, and concerned about the chronically limited resources and capacities of enabling functions of the WHO, including in, but not limited to, prevention capacities and the ethics and investigation function;

Bearing in mind that sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment may have negative physical and mental health consequences for the survivors; and stressing that the WHO has a responsibility to take measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, decided to request the Director General:

- (1) to enhance and implement a values-based, ethical and gender-mainstreamed organizational culture and environment, founded on the basis of accountability, transparency, fairness, inclusion and risk management in the context of the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and other misconduct at all levels of the Organization, including by:

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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> Document EB148/5.

- (a) finalizing and adopting as soon as possible the WHO policies on preventing and addressing abusive conduct, upon adequate consultation with WHO Member States with an emphasis on effective preventive and protective measures;
- (b) strengthening WHO's current prevention capacity in emergencies as well as globally when sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment may be at greater risk of occurring in order to raise awareness and strengthen systems to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment overall, but also from occurring within WHO operations;
- (c) ensuring a safe, accessible and confidential reporting mechanism in order to facilitate and encourage reporting of sexual harassment, without fear of retaliation, as well as timely and comprehensive support for the survivors;
- (d) raising the WHO's current investigative capacity from five investigators to bring it in line with that of other United Nations organizations of equivalent size and ensure that all instances of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, are investigated without undue delay and all responsible individuals are held to account by the Organization;
- (e) ensuring that WHO's investigations team:
  - (i) has the requisite specialist skills and experience to investigate sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment allegations in a survivor-centred manner;
  - (ii) is composed of both female and male investigators, to ensure gender-sensitivity when dealing with survivors, alleged perpetrators and witnesses;
- (f) ensuring WHO's policies and procedures are survivor-centred and align with United Nations system-wide and Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) initiatives, including through:
  - (i) full implementation of the IASC Minimum Operating Standards on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, including ensuring that community-based complaint mechanisms are adapted to local contexts by ensuring community participation;
  - (ii) the United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse involving Implementing Partners;
  - (iii) the United Nations Implementing Partner Protection from Sexual Exploitations and Abuse Capacity Assessment;
  - (iv) recommended measures of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Task Force on Addressing Sexual Harassment within the organizations of the United Nations system, including on accelerated use of the ClearCheck database to prevent individuals who are found to have engaged in sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, threatened or attempted to intimidate survivors or witnesses from coming forward with sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment allegations or otherwise violated WHO's sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment policies, from working for any United Nations organization;
- (g) ensuring corporate risk and compliance functions are enhanced at all three levels of the Organization;
- (h) progressively ensuring integration of risk management and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment awareness and understanding into the recruitment and the performance management agreements of all staff, consultants and contractors, and require and provide necessary training to support this;
  - (i) ensuring that business integrity, accountability and oversight functions are adequately resourced to carry out their mandates;

- (2) to ensure sufficient service delivery to organizations to which WHO provides services related to prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, in accordance with relevant service-level or other agreements;
- (3) to provide updates to Member States via quarterly briefings on the actions above and on WHO's wider work to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and other misconduct, including progress on the Independent Commission on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the implementation of recommendations from the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Senior Support Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- (4) to include the above in the annual reports of the enabling functions to Member States at the World Health Assembly.

The financial and administrative implications of the draft decision for the Secretariat were:

<b>Decision:</b>	Preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
<b>A.</b>	<b>Link to the approved Programme budget 2020–2021</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Output(s) in the approved Programme budget 2020–2021 to which this draft decision would contribute if adopted:</b> 4.2.2. The Secretariat operates in an accountable, transparent, compliant and risk management-driven manner, including through organizational learning and a culture of evaluation
<b>2.</b>	<b>Short justification for considering the draft decision, if there is no link to the results as indicated in the approved Programme budget 2020–2021:</b> Not applicable.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Any additional Secretariat work during the biennium 2020–2021 that cannot be covered by the approved Programme budget 2020–2021:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To undertake and coordinate training and prevention activities (awareness-raising, communication, development of background materials) on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment; and</li> <li>• To manage “reports of concern” involving abusive conduct (that is sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, as well as other types of abusive conduct addressed in the upcoming policy).</li> </ul> <p>Note: There are additional elements related to the implementation of the draft decision that require further analysis, including in relation to “strengthening WHO’s current prevention capacity in emergencies”. These and other related elements towards achieving the objectives of the draft decision are being developed in the context of a holistic and integrated approach to preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Estimated time frame (in years or months) to implement the decision:</b> Three years as costed, then continuing indefinitely as a policy integrated into each Programme budget.
<b>B.</b>	<b>Resource implications for the Secretariat for implementation of the decision</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Total resource requirements to implement the decision, in US\$ millions:</b> US\$ 4.31 million.
<b>2.a.</b>	<b>Estimated resource requirements already planned for in the approved Programme budget 2020–2021, in US\$ millions:</b> US\$ 0.17 million.

<b>2.b. Estimated resource requirements in addition to those already planned for in the approved Programme budget 2020–2021, in US\$ millions:</b> US\$ 0.76 million.
<b>3. Estimated resource requirements to be considered for the proposed programme budget for 2022–2023, in US\$ millions:</b> US\$ 3.38 million.
<b>4. Estimated resource requirements to be considered for the proposed programme budgets of future bienniums, in US\$ millions:</b> To be determined.
<b>5. Level of available resources to fund the implementation of the decision in the current biennium, in US\$ millions</b>  – <b>Resources available to fund the decision in the current biennium:</b> US\$ 0.18 million. Note: Re-programming of the existing activities funds.  – <b>Remaining financing gap in the current biennium:</b> US\$ 0.75 million.  – <b>Estimated resources, not yet available, if any, which would help to close the financing gap in the current biennium:</b> Funding gap to be dealt with through the re-programming of existing funding.

**Table. Breakdown of estimated resource requirements (in US\$ millions)**

Biennium	Costs	Region						Headquarters	Total
		Africa	The Americas	South-East Asia	Europe	Eastern Mediterranean	Western Pacific		
2020–2021 resources already planned	Staff	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.16	0.16
	Activities	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.01	0.01
	Total	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.17	0.17
2020–2021 additional resources	Staff	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.65	0.65
	Activities	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.11	0.11
	Total	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.76	0.76
2022–2023 resources to be planned	Staff	–	–	–	–	–	–	3.23	3.23
	Activities	–	–	–	–	–	–	0.15	0.15
	Total	–	–	–	–	–	–	3.38	3.38
Future bienniums resources to be planned	Staff	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Activities	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	Total	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

The DIRECTOR (Compliance and Risk Management and Ethics) underscored the Secretariat's commitment to its zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. All members of the independent commission established by the Director-General to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had now been appointed and the procurement process for an external company to conduct investigations was under way. The independent commission's first progress report was expected at the end of January 2021. WHO was actively involved in the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee with a view to strengthening the network for

protection against sexual exploitation and abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and establishing a United Nations system-wide strategy on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in the country, and was also supporting the network by recruiting a coordinator in Goma. The Secretariat was fully committed to implementing the Standing Committee's recommendations, in particular the deployment of a sexual exploitation and abuse prevention unit within the epidemic response team. In cooperation with its Standing Committee partners, WHO would also refine its scale-up and response model with a focus on maintaining sufficient oversight of recruitment, procurement and other activities to limit the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse and ensuring a victim-centred approach in investigations, reporting mechanisms, victim-protection measures and the deployment of personnel during emergencies.

Nearly 95% of all WHO staff and affiliated personnel had completed mandatory training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and WHO's implementing partners had minimum standards in place to prevent and respond to such behaviour. WHO's general contractual conditions had been updated to underpin the Organization's zero-tolerance policy and a question on sexual exploitation and abuse policies and investigations had been added to the checklist for emergencies sent to implementing partners. The Secretariat was in the process of finalizing a report on all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving WHO staff and affiliated personnel to be submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND welcomed the rapid establishment of the independent commission and emphasized that it should become fully operational and complete its work as soon as possible. Noting that accountability, responsibility and oversight were vital to the Organization's reputation, he welcomed the progress made in several areas, as well as WHO's increasing engagement in successful United Nations system-wide initiatives, but expressed concern at remaining gaps such as the inadequate resourcing of its enabling functions. Several recently conducted reviews and reports, including those of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee and the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit, contained recommendations relevant to WHO's work on the subject. The Secretariat should work more closely with Member States to support collective efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. With regard to the draft decision, he proposed that all text after the word "misconduct" in paragraph 3 should be deleted to avoid singling out a particular Member State.

The representatives of AUSTRIA, CHILE and NORWAY<sup>1</sup> said that their Governments wished to be added to the list of sponsors of the draft decision.

The representative of INDONESIA expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse and looked forward to receiving a progress report on the matter. Her Government wished to be added to the list of sponsors of the draft decision.

The representative of GHANA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, expressed support for the draft decision. Sexual abuse was a global problem and not specific to one WHO region or country office. The Secretariat should review and strengthen existing mechanisms to prevent sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment at all three levels of the Organization.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA welcomed the work of the independent commission. All forms of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment were unacceptable and undermined the mission of and trust placed in the organizations of the United Nations system. She welcomed the development of a new policy on the prevention of abusive conduct, and would appreciate

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

the opportunity to view the text of the policy before its publication. Appropriate mechanisms and systems should be put in place to support the effective implementation of such policies. The Secretariat should implement a survivor-centred approach to enable survivors and those at risk to safely report such behaviour through strengthened reporting mechanisms and access support. Perpetrators must be held accountable and prevented from working within the United Nations system or with implementing partners. She welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to respond to and address reported incidents. However, in addition to training staff on their obligations, the Secretariat should enhance efforts to prevent and mitigate sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, including by conducting comprehensive risk analysis, increasing the proportion of female staff and ensuring robust staff oversight.

The representative of ISRAEL said that the draft decision contained action-oriented solutions and sent a clear message that all international organizations should share a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. The Secretariat must allocate the necessary resources to tackle the issue, which was often underreported, and ensure that all staff upheld the highest standards in line with principles of transparency, fairness and inclusion. WHO now had an opportunity to lead by example in the United Nations system by taking decisive action on preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in its operations, holding perpetrators to account and providing support and protection for survivors.

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION said that, given the importance of preventing sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment to the success of WHO's work, the Secretariat should submit a separate document on the topic to the 149th session of the Executive Board indicating the mechanisms in place, identifying any weaknesses and gaps in those mechanisms and exploring how to improve current practices in line with those introduced by other organizations of the United Nations system. Member States would then be better placed to make informed decisions on the issue. He took note of the draft decision but requested that its consideration should be deferred to a subsequent session of the Board.

The representative of CANADA<sup>1</sup> said that the draft decision would provide the basis for tangible progress to be made in the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. She welcomed the steps taken by the Secretariat to date and would support its continued efforts to tackle the issue. She firmly condemned all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse in the provision of international aid and encouraged the Secretariat to adopt a victim- and survivor-centred approach. Lessons must be learned from recent experiences. WHO's credibility hinged on the conduct of all staff and affiliated personnel, which must be beyond reproach and centred on principles of equality and diversity. She called on the Secretariat to work with other entities of the United Nations system and humanitarian organizations to share best practices within the context of United Nations reform.

The representative of the NETHERLANDS<sup>1</sup> said that, in order to build trust in the Organization's important work, the Secretariat should share information on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment more frequently and clearly. WHO's enabling functions must be adequately resourced to better support the Organization and its partners, including UNAIDS and IARC, in their work. She requested clarification on resourcing, both in the context of the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 and in comparison with similar multilateral organizations, in order to enable a comprehensive discussion on the sustainable financing of WHO's operations.

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

The representative of MONACO<sup>1</sup> said that, since the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 would be finalized at the current session of the Executive Board, the draft decision should also be adopted during the current session in order to enable implementation of the work set out therein.

The DIRECTOR (Compliance and Risk Management and Ethics) thanked Member States for their support for the Secretariat's work. He had taken note of the calls for: greater cooperation and sharing of experiences with entities of the United Nations system and other organizations; a survivor-centred approach; greater accountability for perpetrators; a comprehensive risk analysis; and strengthened oversight of WHO staff and affiliated personnel, including to prevent the rehiring of perpetrators. The Secretariat was committed to tackling the persistent problem of unreported and underreported sexual exploitation and abuse.

**Mr Kümmel took the Chair.**

The CHEF DE CABINET said that, despite the myriad challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Secretariat remained committed to the ambitious agenda that had been set at the 146th session of the Executive Board and to its zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. One of the key challenges in the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse was the breadth of organizational activity it encompassed. The Secretariat would address the issues highlighted in the draft decision, such as investigations, training and adequate resourcing of WHO's accountability functions, and would increase momentum to ensure that those resources were deployed quickly and effectively. It would report to Member States on progress made in that regard.

It had been decided to establish an independent commission to investigate and address the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo rather than refer the cases to investigators, so that the Secretariat could learn why women had been reluctant to report such misconduct and to use that knowledge to uncover the truth, protect and support victims, and prevent abuse in future. The ambitious approach taken by WHO was the first of its kind in the United Nations system. A report on the commission's work would be submitted to Member States at the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly.

The Organization's work to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse was underpinned by the need to change the existing attitudes and culture. Achieving best-in-class processes was at the heart of the review process and the WHO transformation agenda. It was only by taking the necessary and appropriate action that a true difference could be made to the lives of those served by the Organization, as well as WHO staff. The Secretariat had taken on board Member States' comments and would report on sexual exploitation and abuse more regularly and work harder to drive change.

The SECRETARY read out the proposed amendment to the draft decision. Paragraph 3 would be amended to read: "to provide updates to Member States via quarterly briefings on the actions above and on WHO's wider work to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment and other misconduct".

The representative of GHANA said that, in the light of the amendment to paragraph 3, his Government wished to be added to the list of sponsors of the draft decision.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to adopt the draft decision, as amended.

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

The decision, as amended, was adopted.<sup>1</sup>

Dr Vardhan resumed the Chair.

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

##### **2. BUDGET AND FINANCE MATTERS:** Item 17 of the agenda

**Proposed programme budget 2022–2023:** Item 17.1 of the agenda (documents EB148/25 and EB148/25 Add.1)

- **Sustainable financing** (documents EB148/26, EB148/26 Add.1 and EB148/26 Add.2)

**Update on the financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2020–2021:** Item 17.2 of the agenda (document EB148/27)

The CHAIR invited the Board to consider the reports contained in documents EB148/25, EB148/25 Add.1 and EB148/27. He also drew attention to the recommendations of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee set out in paragraphs 21 and 26 of the Committee's report, contained in document EB148/5.

The representative of GHANA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, noted with satisfaction the significant improvements in the utilization of the approved Programme budget 2020–2021 compared with the previous biennium and the appreciable increases in resources invested in WHO. He commended the Secretariat's response to calls for funding to be more equitably distributed across regional and country offices. Future reports should also provide a summary of the benefits and challenges related to regular reviews of the distribution of global voluntary contributions; implementation of a contributor engagement management system; and strengthening the review of donor proposals and agreements to ensure alignment with the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023. He called on the Director-General to take steps to address the African Region's US\$ 483 million financing shortfall in order to avoid a reversal of the gains made in the Region and to enable its Member States to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic without jeopardizing the achievement of their commitments under the "triple billion" goals.

He welcomed the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 and supported its four key areas of strategic focus and the three streams of additional budgetary elements. However, to make the necessary impact at the country level, the Secretariat should maintain a people- and country-centred approach to all programme budget decisions and allocate the largest proportion of budgetary resources to country offices. Commending the progress made on several indicators of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, he called for further progress on the remaining indicators, in particular on capacity assessment.

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Region, said that Member States had a unique opportunity to reflect on the direction, tools and resources required to ensure a global, coherent and coordinated approach to health protection in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Organization must be equipped with the necessary tools and

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<sup>1</sup> Decision EB148(4).

provided with flexible funding to enable it to fulfil its mandate effectively and independently. She supported the proposal to extend the Thirteenth General Programme of Work to 2025, which would help to align WHO's work with the wider United Nations system planning cycle. The Secretariat should provide regular updates throughout that process and strengthen its communication with Member States on the proposed increases to the base and total programme budget, ideally in advance of the governing body meetings scheduled for May 2021.

Turning to the sustainable financing of WHO, she emphasized that Member States should have the opportunity to make an informed decision on the budget for the biennium 2022–2023 at the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly, including with regard to how any further budget increases would be financed. In the absence of any proposed increase in assessed contributions, Member States would need to decide whether the budget increase should be funded entirely through voluntary contributions. Further discussions were needed to reach consensus on the sustainable financing of WHO. In view of WHO's vital role in health emergencies and in achieving universal health coverage and health equity, all regions should work together to strengthen WHO's financial situation, taking into consideration the United Nations funding compact.

The representative of CHINA supported the proposal to extend the date for achievement of the "triple billion" targets under the Thirteenth General Programme of Work to 2025. He requested further information regarding the proposal to integrate elements of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator into the base budget since that initiative was already mobilizing funds independently. Clarification was also needed on whether the proposed budget increase would affect the overall level of assessed contributions, and on the relationship between the WHO Foundation and the regular budget. He expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's efforts to mobilize funding for the approved Programme budget 2020–2021 but highlighted the need for Member States to continue providing support through assessed and voluntary contributions to ensure predictable funding in the long term. Once the COVID-19 pandemic was no longer an acute challenge, activities impacted by the crisis should be gradually stepped up in order to ensure the implementation of base programmes in the approved Programme budget 2020–2021.

The representative of GERMANY expressed concern at the information on the draft proposed programme budget contained in the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee. The results-based budgeting approach should continue to be used. He highlighted the cyclical nature of discussions on the programme budget, including on: whether it would be fully financed; funding sources; the use of available flexible resources; inadequate financing, including of WHO's enabling functions and key issues; the lack of new donors and wholly flexible resources; and the overreliance on individual donors. The continual frustration expressed by Member States at the challenges related to the financing of the Organization would only be alleviated by adapting the current WHO financing model. He therefore expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's efforts to address the issue by prompting a discussion on sustainable financing and was confident that a common solution could be found.

The representative of AUSTRALIA said that the revised draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 should provide further detail on the proposed increase in the base segment, including how it would be financed; how the stocktakes would help to resolve the bottlenecks created by the COVID-19 pandemic; and how the additional budgetary elements identified would support programme budget priorities. Member States needed to be assured that the budget had been developed in a cost-conscious manner. She supported the proposed mid-term revision of the programme budget and the extension of the timeline for the achievement of the "triple billion" targets and thanked the Secretariat for confirming that reporting on the results framework for the Thirteenth General Programme of Work would include a reflection on how the pandemic had affected targets and shifted priorities. She encouraged the Secretariat to continue its focus on integrating equity, gender and human rights into its work.

The representative of KENYA congratulated the Secretariat on the financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2020–2021, but expressed deep concern regarding the financing shortfall in the African Region. She therefore welcomed the mitigation measures to improve the equitable and timely allocation of resources, in particular the establishment of a resource allocation committee, the composition of which should uphold the principles of transparency and balanced regional representation. She looked forward to increased engagement with Member States and WHO country and regional offices in the process of finalizing the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 and urged the Secretariat to allocate resources towards enhancing the capacities of country offices. In addition, she looked forward to the full implementation of the recommendations resulting from the functional reviews carried out in the African Region.

The representative of BANGLADESH, welcoming the proposed increases in the base and total programme budget for the biennium 2022–2023, requested a breakdown of how the increment would be allocated at the regional and country levels. He welcomed the inclusion of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic in the development of the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023. In the light of the significant disruption caused by the pandemic, he supported the proposal to extend the Thirteenth General Programme of Work to 2025 and requested the Secretariat to take the WHO transformation strategy into account in its implementation and to refine its strategies and approaches accordingly. He called on the Secretariat to continue its efforts to ensure predictable, sustainable funding in close collaboration with Member States, prioritizing underfunded areas such as health emergencies and healthy populations, and supported the proposed establishment of a working group on sustainable financing. Lastly, he expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for its support in extending health care services to the displaced Rohingya people in his country and urged the Secretariat to continue providing the necessary resources until their safe, dignified and voluntary return to Myanmar.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND expressed support for the proposed approach to the preparation of the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 and broadly supported its four key areas of strategic focus and the proposal to extend the Thirteenth General Programme of Work and the achievement of the “triple billion” targets to 2025. Efforts should be redoubled to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Member States must be given sufficient time and information to comprehensively review the draft proposed programme budget before the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly. Further clarification was needed on several aspects, including on the extent to which the Secretariat had been able to incorporate lessons learned without pre-empting the findings of the anticipated forthcoming reviews; whether the proposed budget increase was realistic given that further costs could emerge from the recommendations resulting from those reviews; whether it was the right time to consider significant increases to the base budget before the imminent presentation of the new WHO investment case; and how the new investment case would be reflected in the development of the draft proposed programme budget. She welcomed the Secretariat’s assurances that initiatives such as the WHO Foundation and the WHO Academy were expected to be cost-neutral in the longer term but underlined the need for transparency regarding all new initiatives and their inclusion in a clear transformation strategy to avoid such surprises in future.

The representative of ARGENTINA supported the proposal to extend the achievement of the “triple billion” targets to 2025. She expressed appreciation for the proposed increase in funding for quality essential health services and emergency operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic but requested further details on how it would be allocated. She called for a more equitable distribution of funding across the four strategic priorities and a diversification of the donor base. The winding down of polio eradication activities was of concern. Although the proposed 28% increase in funding allocated to the Regional Office for the Americas was welcome, the latter continued to receive the lowest budgetary

allocation among regional offices and required a significant increase in funding in the year 2021 to enable it to meet its needs. All regional offices should receive equitable financing.

The representative of INDONESIA called for a more balanced distribution of financing across the four strategic priority areas to ensure a more equitable implementation and achievement of activities. He expressed support for the Secretariat's proposals to maximize the secure and ethical use of digital technology for health and to extend the Thirteenth General Programme of Work to 2025, implementation of which had been hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, the Secretariat should strengthen the support provided to Member States to implement transformative initiatives in order to enable them get back on track. Highlighting that the achievement of the "triple billion" targets under the Thirteenth General Programme of Work would be contingent on the strengthening of WHO's role as the leading authority for global health policy, he expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's advancements in the use of science and data, in particular to respond to and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The inclusion of the new COVID-19 lessons-learned initiative and the delivery of the WHO transformation agenda in the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 would also accelerate progress towards achieving those targets.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that Member States should seize the opportunity presented to envisage new ways of working to avoid replicating the cyclical discussions surrounding effective financing of the Organization. It was essential to ensure that the proactive initiatives being proposed by the Secretariat had strong support among Member States and financial oversight. He welcomed the two-stage approach to the preparation of the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 and supported the recommendation of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee on convening intersessional consultations. He looked forward to further information on the implications of the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work to 2025, including on how it would be linked to the discussions on sustainable financing. His Government looked forward to participating in those discussions.

Turning to the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, he expressed appreciation for the progress made in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment at WHO in the areas of leadership, equal representation and organizational culture. However, he encouraged the Secretariat to continue to address the representation of women in the professional and higher job categories, in particular in the major offices in the African and Eastern Mediterranean Regions, to ensure that WHO continued to meet performance indicator 12 under the Action Plan framework.

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION noted with satisfaction the agreements reached on the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 during the thirty-third meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, but said that more could have been done. Noting the Committee's recommendation that the Secretariat should submit preliminary estimates by outputs, broken down by staffing and activity costs, for information purposes, he called for additional financial assessments on each key item of expenditure in order to enhance the transparency of WHO's work and increase confidence among Member States in the Organization's use of assessed contributions. Such assessments could also provide the basis for an analysis of the general trends in expenditure and facilitate a comparative analysis of the resources required and used. He stressed that, in seeking such information, he was not calling for changes in the programme budget development process, but rather improvements in the provision of financial information.

The representative of FINLAND said that the discussions on the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 and sustainable financing were interlinked, and a clear road map was therefore required. The proposed two-phase approach could serve as a good basis in that regard. In the light of the budgetary pressures faced by WHO, she supported the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General

Programme of Work to 2025 and would welcome an update on the results framework. She strongly supported efforts to provide sufficient resources for WHO's enabling functions. Further information on the proposed investments in science, research and digitalization, which would strengthen WHO's normative functions, should be provided in advance of the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly. The draft proposed programme budget must remain flexible and adaptable to future developments. Adequate and sustainable financing were crucial to enable a strong Organization that could deliver on its mandate and meet Member States' expectations in the long term. Effective interaction between the budget, sustainable financing and other processes was also required. Lastly, she looked forward to regular updates on the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

The representative of FRANCE<sup>1</sup> said that the COVID-19 pandemic had underscored the importance of a fully funded WHO with sufficient resources to fulfil its mandate. In that context, her Government had increased its financial support for the biennium 2020–2021. She supported in principle the proposed increases in the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023, but further justification of those increases should be provided, in particular regarding the funds allocated to the COVID-19 lessons-learned initiative and activities at WHO headquarters. Her Government could only accept a limited budget increase at present; any major increases should be discussed during the biennium 2022–2023 and be informed by the recommendations from the forthcoming reviews on the COVID-19 response and the proposed working group on sustainable financing, the establishment of which her Government supported. Discussions on increasing WHO's expenditure should take place together with those on the restructuring of the Organization's resources and sustainable financing, given the intrinsic links between those processes.

The representative of the PHILIPPINES<sup>1</sup> expressed appreciation for the mitigation measures proposed in the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 to ensure the implementation of base programmes, in particular universal health coverage, given the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the execution of country support plans during the biennium 2020–2021. She highlighted the value of hiring local contractors and the increased reliance on local partners in the delivery of WHO programmes during the pandemic and requested an update on the savings yielded from travel restrictions. She expressed support for the proposal to extend the achievement of the "triple billion" targets under the Thirteenth General Programme of Work to 2025, emphasizing that empirical evidence from the pandemic should be used to guide any adjustments to its outcome indicators and to inform the monitoring and evaluation framework for universal health coverage. The draft proposed programme budget should take account of refugees, internally displaced and undocumented persons and other marginalized populations in efforts to attain the highest possible standard of health for all.

The representative of MONACO,<sup>1</sup> expressing support for the recommendations of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee under discussion, said that she shared many of the concerns and recommendations of the representatives of Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. She hoped that all outstanding queries would be addressed in the revised draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 and the related consultations. Further clarification should be provided on the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, including on whether a related draft resolution or draft decision would need to be adopted. A draft resolution on the adoption of the draft proposed programme budget should be submitted as soon as possible for consideration by Member States, particularly given that there appeared to be consensus that it should be provisional in nature. She supported the proposal to establish a working group on

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

sustainable financing, whose work should be closely aligned with the revision of the draft proposed programme budget.

The representative of JAPAN<sup>1</sup> supported the four key areas of strategic focus of the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 and the proposal to revise its content based on the recommendations issued by the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response and the experiences of Member States in the COVID-19 response, as well as the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. He encouraged WHO representatives to discuss the expansion of fiscal capacity for health with their host country government. WHO should demonstrate its leadership by exercising its normative role and providing evidence-based technical support. He requested the Secretariat to examine needs, prioritize programmes, improve cost-efficiency, clarify the Organization’s role in the international community, and explain how it would revise the draft proposed programme budget taking into account the discussion on sustainable financing.

The representative of CANADA<sup>1</sup> said that WHO had been underpowered to carry out its work and that expectations continued to outweigh the Organization’s capacities and available resources. To enable Member States to make informed decisions, further details were needed on the proposed investments outlined in the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023. She supported the proposal to conduct a mid-term review and the four key areas of strategic focus. WHO must take global leadership of those areas, providing evidence-based guidance and upholding the highest standards of scientific excellence. The mainstreaming of essential public health functions previously carried out by the polio eradication programme into the base budget would be critical to polio transition, as well as to outbreak prevention, preparedness and response activities. She welcomed the progress made in implementing the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women but called for the concerning reduction in the number of staff appointed to gender-mainstreaming activities to be rectified in the revised draft proposed programme budget. She looked forward to reviewing implementation of the Action Plan at all levels of the Organization on a yearly basis.

The representative of SPAIN<sup>1</sup> said that, based on the findings of the reviews conducted into the COVID-19 response, which had highlighted the need to strengthen WHO’s capacities and ensure sustainable financing, his Government had provided additional and more flexible contributions, with a particular focus on the WHO Health Emergencies Programme. While acknowledging the challenges involved in the preparation of the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023, he recalled that WHO had one of the largest budgets among the organizations of the United Nations system and trusted that cost savings would result from the implementation of the WHO transformation agenda. He called for further information on the proposed budget increase and how it would be financed. He welcomed the proposed information sessions on transition of the polio programme and requested further details on the operation and financing of the WHO Academy. He strongly supported the establishment of a working group on sustainable financing, which should seek to identify alternative funding sources, create incentives for flexible funding and define the role of the WHO Foundation in that area.

The representative of BRAZIL<sup>1</sup> said that the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic had prevented Member States from adequately scrutinizing the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 during its development. He therefore supported its revision and requested the provision of additional information on specific outputs such as staffing and activity costs. Given the sizeable financial strain imposed on countries as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was minimal scope for an increase in assessed contributions. The Secretariat should instead focus on identifying and scaling up efficiency gains, consider reducing earmarking of voluntary contributions and work according to its

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

clearly established mandates. Timely and substantive consultations with Member States should precede the launch of any new initiatives, especially those with cost implications. Member States and the Secretariat must equip the draft proposed programme budget with the necessary tools to ensure the highest levels of transparency and accountability with respect to all revenue streams, including those from new funds and the WHO Foundation.

The representative of TURKEY<sup>1</sup> said that the proposed 5% increase in the total budget was reasonable considering the current situation and the importance of WHO's global technical and normative leadership. Member States must take immediate action to address the chronic financing gap and equip WHO with the resources required in line with global public health needs. The process of prioritizing programmes should be led by Member States and be informed by the recommendations issued by the three review mechanisms. To enhance the flexibility of funds, transparency and accountability must be ensured in the implementation of the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023, especially at the country level. Emphasizing the importance of sustainable financing, she strongly supported the proposed establishment of a working group on sustainable financing and noted that the specialized WHO office for health emergencies, which was hosted by her Government, was well placed to attract new donors and increase sustainable financing by sharing examples of quality, transparent work undertaken.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Business Operations) said that country investment and functional reviews should be considered together, as should sustainable financing and the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023. The Secretariat would strengthen engagement with Member States and ensure the linkages between country offices, the functional reviews and sustainable financing. It would also work to address the issues surrounding WHO's enabling functions, including with respect to the inadequacy of financing, accountability, human resources and comptroller functions. The Deputy Director-General was chairing the resource allocation committee and the Secretariat would ensure adequate representation in that body. He underscored that equitable resource allocation across WHO regions, country offices and outputs would hinge on the flexibility of the resources made available.

Responding to a query regarding the presentation of financial information, he said that the financial information in the draft proposed programme budget needed to be examined alongside the information in the Organization's financial reports and statements for a fuller perspective. However, the Secretariat had taken on board the request for additional information and would present further details together with the draft proposed programme budget to provide Member States with a more comprehensive overview.

In response to a concern raised by the representative of Argentina, he recalled that the Regional Office for the Americas received funding from both the WHO and PAHO budgets; the funding allocation from the WHO budget should therefore not be viewed in isolation. Member States would receive a full picture of funding allocated to the Regional Office to inform discussions on the draft proposed programme budget. The financing and budget for the Regional Office had increased steadily, and the proposed funding increase for the biennium 2022–2023 was the largest among all major WHO offices.

The DIRECTOR (Planning, Resource Coordination and Performance Monitoring) said that the members of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee had received an updated presentation regarding the financing and utilization of the Programme budget 2020–2021. Indeed, the Organization's overall financial situation had greatly improved since the figures published in September 2020: by the end of December 2020, the base segment had been 105% funded, the same level as at the equivalent stage during the biennium 2018–2019, despite the increase in the budget for the biennium

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

2020–2021. Furthermore, almost US\$ 8 billion of funding had been raised in the past year, demonstrating WHO's capacity to raise funds. Based on an assessment of performance regarding the Programme budget 2020–2021, the figures in the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 were therefore realistic. He explained that the WHO Foundation was an innovative response to the persistent challenges related to WHO's financing; however, as a potential rather than concrete source of funding, it had not been included as a revenue stream in the draft proposed programme budget.

He had noted the overall support for the two-stage approach; the four key areas of strategic focus; the outcomes of the proposed budget increases; the mainstreaming of polio assets; and the maintenance of the results-based budgeting approach. The Secretariat would seek to take account of Member States' requests for additional information in the revised draft proposed programme budget, including on the proposed budget increases; a breakdown of preliminary estimates by staffing and activity costs; the budget allocation by country; the projected funds for the biennium 2022–2023; estimates of efficiency savings; and the practical implications of the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. He had also noted the requests for increased investment in the enabling functions, in particular the accountability functions; more frequent and timely consultations; and an advance version of the draft resolution on the draft proposed programme budget, to be made available before the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly to allow sufficient time for its analysis. As to whether the budget increases should be proposed only after the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Preparedness and Response had been issued, the Secretariat believed that the increases were needed now in order to enable the Organization to act quickly to respond to urgent country needs.

The EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (External Relations and Governance), responding to comments regarding the feasibility of the draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023, reassured Member States that alongside efforts to address the long-term challenges on sustainable financing, the Secretariat was working in accordance with the quality financing principles established at the Inaugural WHO Partners Forum, namely predictability, flexibility, lower administration costs and diversification of the donor base, and had implemented initiatives under the four pillars of the WHO resource mobilization strategy, demonstrating the Organization's capacity for additional resource mobilization. The greatest incentive for flexible funding was the ability to successfully deliver the programme budget. However, the Secretariat was both aware of, and would consider ways of tackling, the challenges related to increased flexibility of funding, including the issue of attribution; donor concerns about relationships between experts within Member States and technical programmes being diminished; the need to report in sufficient detail to enable Member States to report back to their governments on the use of flexible resources; and the issue of greater transparency regarding the use of resources at the country level.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL said that, since the start of the WHO transformation agenda, the Secretariat had endeavoured to implement initiatives with speed and quality, on a large scale and in line with Member States' guidance, a role it had taken very seriously from the outset. In response to a concern raised regarding the launching of initiatives without consulting Member States, he recalled that the Secretariat had announced its intention to launch both the WHO Academy and the WHO Foundation in 2018, followed by an official announcement in 2019 with the involvement of all regional directors. Extensive and transparent consultations on the two initiatives had been held with Member States in 2020. After addressing any concerns raised and based on the support provided, the WHO Academy had been established by the Secretariat, while the WHO Foundation was an independent institution with which the Organization had signed a memorandum of understanding.

The WHO Foundation was a long-term solution to a strategic problem: at the start of the WHO transformation agenda, it had been apparent that WHO's financing model was unsustainable and inflexible with a narrow donor base, meaning that the withdrawal of a key donor could disrupt the Organization's work. As part of efforts to address that issue, the Secretariat had developed an investment case and the WHO resource mobilization strategy, held the Inaugural WHO Partners Forum and launched the WHO Foundation to broaden the donor base. The goal was not just to secure financial

resources but to ensure financial independence. The WHO Foundation was projected to attract US\$ 1 billion over the next three years without the need for investment from the WHO budget and would report to Member States on a regular basis in the interest of transparency.

In a similar vein, the WHO Academy had been established with the aim of future-proofing the Organization and making it fit for purpose. It would need start-up capital but had been designed in such a way that it would not extract any funding from the budget; the end goal was to make it self-sustaining. Once the COVID-19 pandemic was over, the WHO Academy would serve as the Organization's internal and external training hub, moving training from informal workshops to formal, well-designed courses. The WHO Academy would be at the centre of efforts to build capacity for epidemic preparedness and response. Its launch was an element of the Secretariat's response to calls for investment in WHO staff and the Organization's working environment. The WHO Academy would use smart technology to train millions of people, initially through virtual training until in-person training was possible, and would expand into research in future.

Both initiatives had been launched with the aim of preparing the Organization for the future, consistent with the objectives of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work and the WHO transformation agenda. Many of the changes being implemented were relevant to the COVID-19 response and had been accelerated as a result of the pandemic. He looked forward to continued consultations with Member States to refine those initiatives and discuss the overall vision, including at the forthcoming Executive Board retreat. The draft proposed programme budget 2022–2023 would be revised in line with Member States' inputs.

(For continuation of the discussion, see the summary records of the seventh meeting, section 2.)

**The meeting rose at 17:00.**

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