

## **WHO reform**

### **World health days**

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

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. At the Seventy-third World Health Assembly, Member States asked the Secretariat to hold informal consultations and consider a more structured process to observe “world health days” (designated world days, weeks, months, years and decades related to health).<sup>1</sup> This item should be considered on the basis of the analysis of the matter prepared by the Secretariat in document A73/19, which includes a mapping of world health days and an evaluation of their effectiveness, together with an examination of possible alternatives to such events. An initial report prepared by the Secretariat for the Executive Board at its 144th session in 2019 analysed the mandates and current practice, the rationale and objectives of such days, and provided a summary of world days, weeks, years and decades related to health in WHO and the United Nations system.<sup>2</sup> The earlier report also gave a preliminary assessment of the evaluation, costs, impact, possible benchmarks and the way forward should the Executive Board decide to monitor and evaluate the matter in greater depth.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WAY FORWARD**

2. The internal review conducted by the Secretariat and past practice show that no rational framework for establishing and reviewing world health days is available in WHO. One way forward to fill this gap and facilitate the prioritization of topics critical to global health would be to link world health days to the WHO’s general programme of work. To that effect, identification of clear criteria for proposals for new world health days and review of already established world health days, as well as clarifications concerning the expectations by Member States and partners including United Nations entities and other intergovernmental organizations regarding the technical and communications support to be provided by the Secretariat would be needed.

3. It is proposed that the establishment of world health days be systematically decided on through a consultative process whereby any proposals for new world health days would be submitted to the Executive Board at its January meeting. Any such proposals would be discussed intersessionally before a final decision is taken by the Health Assembly.

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<sup>1</sup> See the summary records of the Seventy-third World Health Assembly, first and second meetings of Committee B, section 2.

<sup>2</sup> Document EB144/39 Rev.1.

## **ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

4. The Executive Board is invited to note the report and to provide guidance on the following:
  - whether world health days should be linked to the WHO’s general programme of work;
  - whether proposals for the establishment of world health days should be decided through a consultative process starting with the submission of the proposal to the Executive Board at its January meetings followed by proper consideration in the intersessional period prior to the final determination by the Health Assembly;
  - whether the Secretariat, in consultation with Member States and partners, should hold informal consultations prior to the Seventy-fourth Health Assembly with the view to submit a list of criteria for the establishment of new world health days and the review of the current world health days, as well as identify expectations for support from the Secretariat for the Health Assembly’s consideration.

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