

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING

WHO headquarters, Geneva
Monday, 22 January 2024, scheduled at 14:30

Chair: Dr H.M AL KUWARI (Qatar)

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SECOND MEETING

Monday, 22 January 2024, at 14:40

Chair: Dr H.M. AL KUWARI (Qatar)

1. **REPORT OF THE PROGRAMME, BUDGET AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD:** Item 4 of the agenda (document EB154/4)

The CHAIR reminded the Board that the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board had considered items on the agenda for the current session of the Board. The Board would be invited to consider the Committee's recommendations on each relevant agenda item as it came under discussion by the Board.

The representative of CHINA, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, said that the Committee had made a number of recommendations to the Board, including with regard to: the WHO investment round; matters emanating from the Agile Member States Task Group on Strengthening WHO's Budgetary, Programmatic and Financing Governance; engagement with non-State actors in official relations with WHO; the membership renewal of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee; and amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules.

The Committee had also considered and noted the report of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee. It had welcomed the Advisory Committee's role in monitoring the implementation of recommendations, including in the areas of risk management; the Business Management System; the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; internal and external audit; evaluation; security; and the handling of potential allegations against the Director of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. It had welcomed the Advisory Committee's visit to the WHO African Region and three of its country offices and had appreciated the Advisory Committee's work in building confidence in the Organization. It had also requested the Advisory Committee to provide more regular briefings to Member States in preparation for the discussions at meetings of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that strengthening and reforming WHO constituted a key priority for her Government. She expressed the hope that the outstanding actions in the Secretariat implementation plan on reform would be addressed and welcomed the continued work of the Agile Member States Task Group. The extensive consultation process on financing was appreciated and she was optimistic that the new approach to resource mobilization would increase the predictability and sustainability of funding. Work in that area should be conducted in coordination with partners and complement existing efforts. She thanked the Secretariat, in particular the Director-General, for its continued commitment to zero tolerance of sexual misconduct, which should be embedded in the culture of the Organization.

The representative of ETHIOPIA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, welcomed the discussions on the draft fourteenth general programme of work, 2025–2028. It was crucial to build on the lessons learned from the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025, and to hold further Member State consultations to refine the indicative outputs for measuring the Secretariat's performance, the results framework and the theory of change, as well as the indicative budget envelope. He commended the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee for its visit to the African

Region and for its recommendations, and agreed that the Advisory Committee should provide more regular briefings to Member States.

While he appreciated the increase in country-level allocations, more needed to be done to ensure the predictable, flexible and sustainable funding of WHO. A more even distribution of funding was needed to erase pockets of poverty, build country capacity – including in relation to data and innovation – and enhance regional support for countries. He therefore supported the WHO investment round and called for the finalization of the investment case. The work carried out by the Agile Member States Task Group was also welcome; continued Member State leadership was needed to maintain the momentum towards achieving the desired reforms.

Commending the Secretariat's work on the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, he called for a greater focus on building an organizational culture and a comprehensive victim- and survivor-centred approach, especially in health emergencies. It was also important to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation functions at the country and regional levels, notably by allocating the required budget and funding; evaluation was crucial in enhancing governance, including results-based management. He recognized the important role played by non-State actors, but highlighted the need to fully understand the implications of their involvement to reach informed decisions. Acknowledging the immense contribution of the WHO workforce, he called for a greater focus on safeguarding their health, well-being, safety and security.

The representative of CHINA said that a clear timeline would accelerate the implementation of the Agile Member States Task Group's recommendations on reform, with regular reporting to Member States in line with the principles of openness and transparency. With regard to the use of contributions and donations, performance indicators should be established at the national and regional levels, and communicated to Member States in a timely manner. It was also necessary to increase budget distribution at the national level and prioritize Member States' needs. Discussions on establishing any new mechanisms or institutions must be conducted on the basis of consensus and avoid imposing an additional financial burden on Member States. His Government further underscored the importance of abiding by the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors, and of improving geographical representation among WHO staff. Observing that the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee should play a more prominent role, he encouraged the Secretariat to continue providing regular support to the Committee to enable it to contribute to work on the Secretariat implementation plan on reform and the recommendations of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee.

The representative of AFGHANISTAN said that it was vital to align resources with strategic priorities and ensure that all spending resulted in tangible benefits at the country level. Innovation and adaptability were essential in the light of the rapidly evolving global health landscape; collaborative platforms and other technology could be leveraged to facilitate faster, more targeted responses, while a proactive stance on emerging health threats would demonstrate that the Organization's support was both effective and anticipatory. The Programme, Budget and Administration Committee should explore avenues for increasing transparency and accountability to further enhance WHO's credibility. He noted the need to expedite reform initiatives and the opportunity to recalibrate WHO's approach, especially in conflict zones.

The representative of BRAZIL welcomed the extended duration of the meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, which had allowed for more in-depth discussion, and commended the Secretariat's quick response to comments made at the meeting. The engagement of Member States and the Secretariat in the work of the Committee demonstrated their commitment to building a stronger WHO that was more sustainable, efficient and fit for purpose, and which responded to the needs of Member States.

The representative of SLOVAKIA highlighted the importance of issuing meeting documents on time, which could be supported through the use of new technologies, to ensure Member States' effective engagement in discussions. The consultative process should continue during the intersessional period on the draft fourteenth general programme of work, the results framework and the delivery-for-impact approach in order to understand how countries' and the Secretariat's priorities were aligned. Discussions were also needed on budget matters, including on alternative ways of ensuring sustainable financing and the timely implementation of recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the governing bodies. The Organization's short- and long-term performance would depend on collective efforts and ensuring sufficient capacity at the regional and country levels to deal with evolving challenges.

The Board noted the report.

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

2. BUDGET AND FINANCE MATTERS: Item 24 of the agenda

Draft fourteenth general programme of work: Item 24.2 of the agenda (documents EB154/28 and EB154/INF./1)

The representative of CHINA, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, drew attention to the guidance and recommendations proposed by the Committee on the draft fourteenth general programme of work, 2025–2028, set out in paragraph 38 of document EB154/4.

The representative of DENMARK, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, said that the candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine and Georgia, and the European Free Trade Association country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, aligned themselves with his statement. He welcomed the participatory process for developing the draft fourteenth general programme of work, its structure and the focus on WHO's comparative strengths. It was vital to safeguard the Organization's essential normative function, and to ensure that its guidance was based on rigorous, up-to-date and quality-assured scientific knowledge.

He expressed support for WHO's leadership and its ongoing cooperation with other relevant actors in the global health ecosystem, as well as efforts to ensure that the Organization was fully fit for a changing world. A Health in All Policies approach would be key to addressing challenges efficiently. Efforts to strengthen WHO's capacities at the national and regional levels were also welcome, and engagement with civil society and communities should be encouraged. The continued integration of equality, equity and human rights into the work of WHO was positive and the proposed outcomes and indicators should include a greater focus on gender responsiveness and human rights, as rights-based health care reduced inequities. A particular emphasis should be placed on leaving no one behind, while a better integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights was also needed. He welcomed the inclusion of training for health workers and the strong link between the draft programme of work and the WHO investment round, highlighting the importance of adequate, sustainable and predictable financing.

The representative of JAPAN welcomed the consultative process for developing the draft fourteenth general programme of work, as well as its reflection of lessons learned from implementing the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025, and clarification of the theory of change. However, outputs and outcomes should be further clarified, and account should be taken of data

availability and the need for realistic target-setting for the triple billion targets. He appreciated efforts to share and update the indicators of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work and related data as a means of ensuring transparency, and requested continued reporting on progress towards achieving the indicators of the draft programme of work.

The representative of PERU said that the draft fourteenth general programme of work provided a robust road map to guide the Organization's future work. He welcomed its six strategic objectives and the focus on the needs of populations in vulnerable situations and on the impact of climate change on health. The inclusion of other important topics, such as the social determinants of health, mental health, gender equality and migrants, was also positive. During implementation, WHO must ensure that its actions were aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and work with the international community to ensure better health and well-being for all. Adequate funding and high-level political commitment were also needed to achieve a measurable, significant impact. He appreciated the involvement of Member States in defining the programmatic priorities and the emphasis on establishing mechanisms to monitor and evaluate implementation, which in turn would help to strengthen actions in regional and country offices and achieve a measurable impact on health.

The representative of CANADA appreciated the consultative development process for the draft fourteenth general programme of work. As a science-based organization, WHO should drive the mobilization, translation and implementation of high-quality evidence-based guidance and assess its impact, including through an equity lens. She welcomed the continued shift towards country-level impact and the close fit between the draft programme of work and the conclusions of the Future of Global Health Initiatives process (Lusaka Agenda). The emphasis on multisectoral cooperation and community engagement was also commendable, and she agreed that integrated and horizontal ways of working should be reinforced to deliver on the overarching goal of the draft programme of work.

She welcomed WHO's commitment to health equity, gender equality, human rights and the promotion of healthy lives and well-being across the life course. In strengthening its work on the social determinants of health, the Organization should work with partners and promote evidence-based policies to address power imbalances and other barriers to gender equality and health for all. The draft programme of work should align with WHO's commitments under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and serve as a future guide for Member States when they sought support from or provided support to the Organization.

The representative of AUSTRALIA welcomed the overall direction of the draft fourteenth general programme of work and supported the renewed focus on the Sustainable Development Goals and the triple billion targets. Efforts to achieve the unmet targets of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025, were also welcome, as were the inclusion of climate change as a central theme and the emphasis on principles of inclusivity, gender equality, equity and human rights. He supported the focus on innovation, including digital and artificial intelligence solutions for health, and on improving country- and regional-level operational capacities. Budgetary restraint and efficiencies that maximized impact and value were important in the light of the growing expectations of WHO. He therefore strongly supported efforts to sustainably finance the Organization, including by expanding the donor base. With regard to improving governance, he welcomed ongoing efforts to enhance transparency, accountability and efficiency, and the continued work on the Secretariat implementation plan on reform.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA expressed support for the current framing of the draft fourteenth general programme of work and its emphasis on Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages), equity and climate change. Balancing and integrating efforts in those areas would be key, as would ensuring a return on investment in the light of limited resources. She supported the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee's recommendation on intermediate outcomes. It was important to clearly articulate WHO's

unique added value and to develop metrics to help to measure progress on reform, including to track the results of investment rounds and to identify efficiencies across programmes.

Given that the success of the draft programme of work hinged on the effective operation of the Organization, she looked forward to learning of the proposed outputs and outcomes on oversight and administrative functions under parts 3 and 4 of the draft on powering the global health agenda and optimizing WHO's performance. It was also important to clearly articulate and ensure a solid foundation for the investment case and take on board lessons from the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025. Collaborative efforts were key to creating a transparent monitoring and evaluation framework, while the use of existing metrics would help to avoid additional reporting burdens on Member States. She looked forward to further consultations.

The representative of FRANCE appreciated the more strategic focus of the draft fourteenth general programme of work, the open and constructive development process and the priority themes. Training for health workers was of strategic importance to achieving universal health coverage; continuous professional development was needed in view of the rapid evolution of medical science. The Organization should therefore continue to place training at the heart of its activities, notably through the new WHO Academy.

The representative of MALAYSIA expressed overall support for the draft fourteenth general programme of work, which emphasized the need for further efforts to achieve the health-related Sustainable Development Goals, and welcomed its focus on the principles of health equity. He called for an increase in the funding allocated to the Western Pacific Region, which would enable more impactful, meaningful work in the Region to support Member States. The results framework had been an effective tool in measuring progress related to the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025. He was therefore pleased to note that the triple billion targets would be recalibrated, including in relation to indicators on climate change and mental health.

The representative of YEMEN, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, commended the Secretariat for its efforts in developing the draft fourteenth general programme of work in line with the Secretariat implementation plan on reform, and welcomed the inclusive development process. The focus on advancing health equity and health system resilience by promoting, providing and protecting health and well-being for all reflected the needs of the Member States of the Region, as did the promotion of the health of refugees, migrants and their host communities. The draft programme of work should ensure a tangible impact at the national level, and integrate the tools and frameworks of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025, to facilitate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets at the country level. Furthermore, as a technical strategy, it should support the WHO investment round to enable more equitable financing of health programmes.

He noted with concern the inclusion of controversial and divisive language and concepts in the draft programme of work which had not been agreed by consensus. Its wording should remain in line with universally agreed principles and standards, taking into account the cultural sensitivities of all Member States, and avoid creating the false impression that such terminology had been globally approved. The common goal should be to strengthen ownership of WHO's activities and broaden the engagement of Member States. The Member States of the Region were committed to participating in future consultations to further refine the draft programme of work.

The representative of BRAZIL welcomed the overarching goal for the draft fourteenth general programme of work of promoting, providing and protecting health, and its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, which should continue to guide WHO's work until the year 2030. However, some points required further discussion and clarification, especially with regard to measuring outcomes. Climate change was an important issue, but should not be treated in isolation from other

environmental determinants of health. In addition, it was unclear how some developing countries would be able to commit to lowering their carbon emissions given their limited health system capacity; that issue must be resolved. He welcomed the focus on the root causes of ill health and the determinants of health. In view of the strategic importance of that issue, he requested all Member States to support the convening of a high-level meeting on the topic in the year 2025, as had been proposed by the members of the Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative.

The representative of CHINA endorsed the overarching goal of promoting, providing and protecting health and appreciated the Secretariat's commitment to advancing the global health agenda. There was room for further improvement to the draft fourteenth general programme of work to enhance cooperation among countries and international organizations. At the global level, WHO should focus its work on developing technical guidelines and standards that would help countries and regions to improve their technical capacity. Consensus should be forged among countries to formulate more implementable technical norms in line with global realities. In addition, dialogue with countries should be strengthened and a more effective and transparent mechanism established to take into consideration their priorities and strengthen country offices accordingly.

It was essential to maintain continuity between the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025, and the draft fourteenth general programme of work, particularly in relation to the consistency of the indicators and output scorecard, and ensure evaluation methods were open and transparent. The Secretariat should therefore organize consultations with Member States on the indicators and outputs prior to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly. Further clarification was also needed regarding the indicative funding for the draft programme of work and certain objectives in the results framework that did not yet have a corresponding indicator.

The representative of ETHIOPIA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, appreciated the extensive consultative process for developing the draft fourteenth general programme of work and welcomed its overarching goal, which resonated with regional efforts to build resilient health systems and achieve universal health coverage. He looked forward to the continued systematic engagement of Member States in its further development, which should take on board the lessons learned from the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025, and apply results-based management principles. The draft programme of work should also serve as a road map for the investment round.

The representative of TIMOR-LESTE welcomed the consultative development process and was pleased to note that the draft fourteenth general programme of work built on the WHO transformation agenda and the strengths and priorities of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025, while incorporating the lessons learned from the independent evaluation of its implementation. The overarching goal of promoting, providing and protecting health, and the focus on an improved results framework for use at the country, regional and global levels were appreciated. Comprehensive, inclusive, equitable and cost-effective primary health care across the life course would be key to achieving that goal. A greater country focus was also needed, as well as strengthened technical systems, especially for small island developing States such as Timor-Leste.

The representative of the DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA welcomed the six strategic objectives of the draft fourteenth general programme of work, noting that the joint action of all Member States, the Secretariat and partners would be crucial to achieving its outcomes. It was important not only to strengthen leadership and governance, but also to engage more actively in advocacy, as well as in partnerships with Member States and civil society and nongovernmental organizations and in fundraising activities. His Government remained committed to the ongoing consultations and asked the Secretariat to keep Member States fully informed of the process in a timely manner.

The representative of TOGO supported the overarching goal and priority areas of the draft fourteenth general programme of work, which took due account of national priorities. Nevertheless, increased resource mobilization would be needed to implement its ambitious actions.

The representative of PORTUGAL¹ appreciated the inclusive and collaborative development process and endorsed the emphasis on using WHO's comparative advantage in setting norms and standards and providing science-based knowledge. She supported WHO's leadership, its ongoing collaboration with global health partners and efforts to adapt to the evolving world, and appreciated its focus on data. The inclusion of migrant health in the draft programme of work was also appreciated, given the current unprecedented levels of migration and displacement. In that regard, Member States should implement comprehensive measures involving all stakeholders and incorporate national and international interventions into their strategic planning.

The representative of BELGIUM¹ welcomed the strong focus on ensuring more climate-resilient and lower-carbon health systems and societies, improving health equity and tackling health determinants through an intersectoral approach, as well as on the importance of primary health care. In the context of increasingly heavy agendas for meetings of the governing bodies and poor prioritization of items for discussion, the draft fourteenth general programme of work should guide Member States in evaluating the need to propose draft resolutions and decisions. That would ensure that the governing bodies provided relevant guidance for work at all three levels of the Organization, in line with shared objectives.

The representative of THAILAND¹ underscored the importance of measuring progress through the results framework, both in terms of impact at the country level and WHO's delivery of outputs. Expressing concern at the global trends highlighted in the draft fourteenth general programme of work, she called on WHO to leverage its social and intellectual capital to navigate the evolving global health landscape and ensure adequate resource mobilization to meet emerging challenges. To optimize WHO's performance, concrete strategies were required to enhance staff capacity at all levels. Collective action and a results-oriented approach would be needed to achieve the ambitious goals of the draft programme of work.

The representative of GERMANY¹ welcomed the transparent consultative development process. Clarity on WHO's comparative advantage and added value was more important than ever before. The Organization should therefore provide a clear understanding of its role in an increasingly diverse and fragmented global health architecture, highlighting its leadership and coordinating role in addition to its standard-setting role. To ensure a successful investment round, outcomes and outputs must be measurable, with clear baselines and targets that were developed in consultation with Member States to ensure their effective ownership. He requested clarification of the role of the envisaged increase in assessed contributions in financing the draft fourteenth general programme of work.

The representative of EGYPT¹ reiterated the importance of achieving better horizontal alignment between the Secretariat, Member States and partners at the three levels of the Organization. He appreciated WHO's efforts to ensure that sustainable financing was in place to achieve ambitious health goals. Echoing the statement given on behalf of his Region and endorsing the statement delivered by the representative of Ethiopia on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, he emphasized that WHO should remain sensitive to Member States' positions on controversial and divisive concepts. The shared objective should be to enhance ownership of WHO's activities and broaden the scope of Member States' engagement. The language in the draft fourteenth general programme of work and in

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

all other technical documents or resolutions should therefore be aligned with universally agreed principles and norms.

The representative of the NCD ALLIANCE, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR and also on behalf of FDI World Dental Federation, HelpAge International, the International Federation on Ageing, the International Pharmaceutical Federation, the Multiple Sclerosis International Federation, The Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind – Sightsavers, World Cancer Research Fund International, the World Heart Federation, the World Obesity Federation and The Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance, welcomed the outline of the draft fourteenth general programme of work, including its proposed strategic objectives and associated outcomes. She expressed concern, however, that no provision had been made for the participation of civil society and people living with health conditions in further consultations on its development, including on refining the results framework.

The draft programme of work should acknowledge that people living with health conditions such as noncommunicable diseases, including mental health and neurological conditions, were especially vulnerable during health emergencies; encourage the establishment of specific targets for investment in health at the country level, taking into account national contexts; include an indicator to monitor quality-defining clinical and patient-centric outcomes for noncommunicable disease services that were not captured under the universal health service coverage index tracer indicators; and promote the collection of data disaggregated by age, disease, gender, disability, geographical region and socioeconomic grouping. It should also include a reference to appendix 3 to WHO's global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013–2030 under WHO's work on the determinants of health and health promotion, and reflect the importance of the meaningful involvement of people living with a wide range of health conditions in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies across its goals. Member States should support the full, sustainable and predictable financing of WHO's budget for 2025–2028, including for the delivery of programmes related to noncommunicable diseases.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND¹ welcomed the extensive and inclusive consultation process and acknowledged the critical importance of the commitments set out in the Lusaka Agenda and of recognizing the wider health context and architecture within which WHO operated. A strong draft fourteenth general programme of work that built on the lessons learned from the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025, and outlined WHO's unique added value with a clear set of priorities would be crucial to making tangible progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring a successful investment round.

The representative of ARGENTINA¹ appreciated the extensive consultation process and supported the six strategic objectives of the draft fourteenth general programme of work, noting that its focus should be on supporting countries to achieve the health-related Sustainable Development Goals and other related objectives through equitable financing at the regional level. WHO should take a strategic approach to identifying priorities on the basis of data, evidence and return on investment, and should seek effective solutions. To that end, it was necessary to strengthen the Organization's core functions and promote the global public health agenda in collaboration with the public and private sectors and according to countries' actions and targets. She encouraged the Secretariat to continue consultations on the draft programme of work prior to its consideration at the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly.

The representative of COLOMBIA¹ welcomed the acknowledgement in the draft fourteenth general programme of work of the interrelationship between primary health care, emergency

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

preparedness and the social determinants of health, as well as the need for a holistic approach to tackle public health challenges. Country offices should be equipped to provide technical support for Member States to implement actions related to primary health care, while increased community engagement was also needed in developing, implementing and evaluating primary care services. It was important to establish indicators on the coverage of essential services, equitable access and the improvement of population-level results, and develop sustainable financing strategies that supported the long-term implementation of primary health care in collaboration with Member States. In addition, effective information technology and data systems should be introduced to strengthen the management and monitoring of services and information exchange.

The representative of BANGLADESH¹ welcomed the structure of the draft fourteenth general programme of work. To achieve the goal of more climate-resilient and lower-carbon health systems, enhanced support should be provided for climate-vulnerable and developing countries, notably by allocating new and additional resources to promoting and implementing net zero emissions policies. On the root causes of ill health, broader guidance from WHO would be useful in reversing the dominance of commercial interests over public health issues. In addition, populations in vulnerable situations required affordable and timely access to vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics; inadequate access to mpox vaccine was of particular concern. The Secretariat's technical support in developing and promoting a harmonized health database would be pivotal in advancing research and innovation, surveillance and the assessment of future challenges. WHO could also play an important role in diversifying the production of health emergency and pandemic-related products, especially for surge production during health emergencies.

The representative of KENYA¹ welcomed the consultative process in refining the draft fourteenth general programme of work and highlighted the need to demonstrate how the Organization would work within its mandate to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account the work of other organizations of the United Nations system and partners. She therefore welcomed work to address the broader social, economic, environmental and commercial determinants of health, which would inform policy shifts at the national level. In relation to performance management, she supported the inclusion of outputs at the health system level and outcomes at the population level. The monitoring and evaluation framework for the draft fourteenth general programme of work should be closely linked to the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025, to minimize the need for country-level training and a reorientation of reporting and implementation practices. Countries' capacities for generating, managing, analysing and communicating health data should also be taken into account. Country-level data should be used to drive programmatic work to the extent possible, with countries supported on the basis of their needs and vulnerability. She looked forward to working on the baseline and metrics for monitoring progress.

The representative of THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND – SIGHTSAVERS, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR and also on behalf of The Fred Hollows Foundation, the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, CBM Christoffel Blindenmission Christian Blind Mission e.V., the Organisation pour la Prévention de la Cécité and the World Council of Optometry, was pleased to note the recognition of eye health under outcome 4.1 of the draft fourteenth general programme of work. She urged the inclusion in the results framework of the two global eye care indicators endorsed by the Health Assembly in decision WHA74(12) (2021), which represented two of the most cost-effective health interventions available, and would help to track progress towards universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals and measure the quality of outcomes.

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

The representative of NAMIBIA¹ expressed support for the six strategic objectives of the draft fourteenth general programme of work in principle. However, further consultations with Member States were needed to improve certain indicators and ensure measurable outputs and outcomes aligned with regional and country contexts, particularly in relation to climate change and health. Recognizing the importance of the draft programme of work in shaping the global health agenda, he urged Member States to support its sustainable financing. He supported the recommendations stemming from the independent evaluation of the 2019–2023 period of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work.

The representative of MEXICO¹ said that the draft fourteenth general programme of work presented an opportunity to harness renewed public and political interest in health and combine WHO's work with that of other international actors. The strategic objectives and outcomes emphasized the Organization's added value and comparative advantage, and were aligned with regional and national priorities and with the challenging global context. The draft programme of work should further demonstrate the harmful effects of climate change on health in order to promote global action to reduce its root causes. Implementation of the other strategic objectives would also be key to adapting to that challenge. WHO must continue to actively fulfil its commitments in the areas of health equity, gender equality and human rights through its core functions so that all people could enjoy the highest possible standard of health.

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION¹ said that further development of the draft fourteenth general programme of work was needed, in consultation with Member States, on its content and the indicators for monitoring progress. In particular, there was an excessive focus on environmental issues. WHO could make a significant contribution to addressing the impacts of climate change on health, but should not deal specifically with combating climate change. In addition, the draft programme of work must use agreed terminology and take into account national contexts; initiatives that had not been adopted by all countries should not be included. It was important to include provisions on the procedure for preparing a WHO list of medicines for use in emergencies to ensure the safety and efficacy of medical products and vaccines. With regard to the programme budget, data should be provided on the financial needs of the Organization, broken down by main item of expenditure, as well as information on staffing needs at all three levels. An effective mechanism should be created to monitor implementation of the draft fourteenth general programme of work, taking into account countries' capacities.

The representative of INDONESIA¹ said that countries' priorities should be placed at the centre of the overarching goal of the draft fourteenth general programme of work. He underscored the importance of strengthening primary health care for universal health coverage. A robust evaluation mechanism should be established, with multistakeholder engagement to periodically measure results in terms of impacts and outputs. His Government looked forward to participating in further consultations, including on recalibrating the triple billion targets.

The representative of the GLOBAL HEALTH COUNCIL, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR and also on behalf of The Task Force for Global Health, Inc., the United Nations Foundation, Inc., the International Federation on Ageing, the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations, The Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind – Sightsavers, and the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists, welcomed the broad consultations in developing the draft fourteenth general programme of work. WHO should continue to support and strengthen engagement with civil society, young people and other key actors at the country, regional and global levels, and emphasize the importance of social participation platforms in achieving the strategic objectives of the draft programme

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

of work. Member States should provide adequate and flexible financing for its implementation. The draft programme of work must address the structural and systematic barriers that continued to cause health inequities through the routine collection and analysis of high-quality disaggregated data. In relation to universal health coverage, it should emphasize the need to monitor not only service coverage and financial protection, but also the quality of health services and alignment with the disease burden to ensure that all people had access to quality essential health services.

The representative of SAUDI ARABIA¹ said that, in addition to highlighting the issue of antimicrobial resistance, the draft fourteenth general programme of work should cover patient safety within actions on protecting health, given its fundamental role in preventing and mitigating health risks.

The representative of the UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES, speaking on behalf of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, called for the further mainstreaming of nutrition within the draft fourteenth general programme of work across the three areas of promoting, providing and protecting health and well-being for all. Good nutrition was not only a marker of development, it was central to development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It was also pivotal in ensuring an effective response to humanitarian crises, promoting health and preventing noncommunicable diseases, and yielded unparalleled returns on investment. With the collaboration of WHO, nutrition services should be embedded in universal health care in order to uphold everyone's right to nutritious food and health.

The representative of ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE INTERNATIONAL, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, welcomed the inclusion of dementia-related issues in the draft fourteenth general programme of work and encouraged WHO to strengthen dementia-related programmes to ensure that the condition was adequately addressed. He expressed the hope that Member States would commit to a 10-year extension of the global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017–2025.

The representative of THE SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, welcomed the draft fourteenth general programme of work and the consultations with civil society to inform its development. Strong multisectoral collaboration at the country, regional and global levels was needed for its successful implementation and to address the social, economic, commercial and cultural determinants of health. In particular, the draft programme of work must achieve a decrease in maternal and child mortality rates, reduce inequities, increase access to essential health and nutrition services and financial protection, and tackle major threats to human health and well-being, such as climate change.

The representative of WOMEN IN GLOBAL HEALTH, INC., speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, appreciated the progressive nature and consultative development of the draft fourteenth general programme of work, which should build on the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2025, by establishing stronger disaggregated and gender-responsive outcomes and indicators. It should also include specific gender-transformative objectives to achieve goals on human resources for health across its priority areas, and continue to prioritize equal leadership for women in health at the community, national, regional and global levels.

The representative of THE WELLCOME TRUST, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, welcomed the engagement of non-State actors in the consultative development process. She called on Member States to support the draft fourteenth general programme of work and to recognize the impact of the climate on global health. The climate crisis represented a pressing health crisis that must drive

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

urgent action to avoid reversing decades of progress. Comprehensive and integrated climate mitigation, adaptation and global public health strategies were needed to protect the health of all, especially the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations.

The representative of KNOWLEDGE ECOLOGY INTERNATIONAL, INC., speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, said that the draft fourteenth general programme of work should more explicitly recognize the high prices of medical technologies and propose concrete measures to make medicines accessible to all. To that end, more effective national laws and practices were needed, together with reforms of the policy framework for funding research and development by delinking incentives from monopolies and high prices. Efforts were also needed to ensure more equal access to medicines to aid weight loss and medicines for rare diseases.

The representative of THE COCHRANE COLLABORATION, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, welcomed the development of the draft fourteenth general programme of work and the ongoing consultations with civil society. She was particularly pleased to note the recognition of WHO's core science- and evidence-based leadership role. Reliable and sustainable funding must be ensured for the production of WHO's evidence-based guidelines, which constituted a global public good and were vital to achieve country-level impact.

The representative of MOVENDI INTERNATIONAL, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, welcomed the draft fourteenth general programme of work and its inclusion of alcohol as a cross-cutting risk factor for noncommunicable and communicable diseases. Highlighting the need to address the harmful use of alcohol as a root cause of ill health and health inequity, he called on WHO to cease its dialogue with the alcohol industry, whose activities constituted a key commercial determinant of health. The SAFER initiative could help to achieve the strategic priorities of the related triple billion target; in that regard, the Secretariat should better identify and use the potential of alcohol policy across all relevant global health priorities.

The representative of the INTERNATIONAL BABY FOOD ACTION NETWORK, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, said that the draft fourteenth general programme of work should include measures to protect breastfeeding through all WHO country offices, especially with respect to new strategies such as digital marketing. WHO's key role in ensuring policy coherence with World Trade Organization and Codex Alimentarius trade rules would help Member States to regulate marketing in line with WHO recommendations without fear of challenge. The Organization's norm-setting role should not be undermined by external pressure or undue commercial influence. To that end, the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors must be strengthened to safeguard WHO's independence, integrity and trustworthiness. Flexible funding should also be increased and anonymous donations forbidden.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Universal Health Coverage/Life Course) appreciated the guidance received on the draft fourteenth general programme of work and was pleased to note the interest in holding further consultations, which the Secretariat would organize. The forthcoming discussions would cover matters such as the outcome indicators, baselines and targets, and the degree to which disaggregated data could be used to support them. He reassured Member States that a key part of that process would be the development of intermediate outcomes, indicators and indicative outputs regarding the Secretariat's performance. He also appreciated the inputs from civil society and implementing partners and assured them that they would continue to be part of the consultative process.

Responding to a number of Member States, he emphasized that parts 3 and 4 of the draft programme of work were focused on identifying and leveraging WHO's comparative advantage and added value, and especially on the generation of evidence-based normative and technical advice for Member States and the broader community. The Secretariat had taken note of the issues raised and areas

on which further discussion had been requested, such as climate change, as well as the incorporation of work related to the Lusaka Agenda, which WHO was already undertaking and was closely linked to its convening and coordinating role. It had also taken note of the emphasis on WHO's country presence. With regard to the financing of the draft fourteenth general programme of work, the planned increase in assessed contributions and the investment round would be vital and flexible funding would be required to ensure that historic pockets of poverty were addressed.

He looked forward to receiving written comments and holding further consultations with Member States on the narrative for the draft fourteenth general programme of work, which would feed into a revised narrative to be issued by mid-March 2024. The consultative process on the outcome indicators, baselines and targets would continue in parallel.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to note the report contained in document EB154/28, as recommended by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.

The Board noted the report.

Financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2022–2023 and outlook on financing of the Programme budget 2024–2025: Item 24.1 of the agenda (document EB154/27)

The representative of CHINA, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, drew attention to the guidance and recommendations proposed by the Committee on financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2022–2023 and outlook on financing of the Programme budget 2024–2025 set out in paragraph 25 of document EB154/4.

The representative of BRAZIL reiterated the urgent need for WHO to address the chronic underfunding in his Region. Highlighting the distinction between PAHO and the Region of the Americas, he acknowledged the increased allocation of resources to the Region, but said that it still did not reflect a fair distribution of funding. The existing inequity in the regional allocation of resources should be rectified through the current budgetary discussions, taking into account the needs of each region. Given the recent increase in assessed contributions and the proposals for future increases, it was important to bear in mind the efforts requested by the Working Group on Sustainable Financing, among others, in terms of administrative improvements, increased transparency and better accountability. The high proportion of earmarked voluntary contributions was also of concern. Complete disclosure of information on expenditures must be ensured, in line with the common practice of other organizations of the United Nations system.

The representative of JAPAN, noting the 20% increase in assessed contributions, said that the allocation of funding must be prioritized, including by allocating funding to underfunded areas, as shown in the Secretariat's funding heat map. The final results of the budget utilization and implementation rate for the Programme budget 2022–2023 should be closely monitored, as should the future financing situation related to the Programme budget 2024–2025 and its impact on programmes. He appreciated the regular updates provided on the WHO Programme budget web portal and looked forward to further discussions as a means of promoting budget transparency and efficiency.

The representative of SENEGAL, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, welcomed the increased allocation of funds in the total programme budget and the updated estimate of needs for the emergency operations and appeals segment. The regular updates on budget implementation were also appreciated, as were efforts to increase the predictability of funds and their timely implementation. Sustainable financing must be ensured while increasing the flexibility of funding. Mechanisms for the equitable allocation of resources should be strengthened in order to better meet the

financial needs of regions and countries, in particular those of the African Region, and the priorities of the Programme budget 2024–2025. Additional resource mobilization was needed for health promotion and prevention efforts, in particular to control chronic noncommunicable diseases. Increased flexible funding within the framework of universal health coverage was also needed to tackle neglected tropical diseases, in view of their close link with climate change. He commended the Secretariat on the level of funds available for the Programme budget 2024–2025.

The representative of MALAYSIA, expressing appreciation for the shortened format of the report, welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to improve flexibility in the timely mobilization of resources. Noting the high proportion of voluntary earmarked contributions, she hoped that the investment round would broaden the financing base to support the prioritization agreed by Member States and increase levels of financing for underfunded activities. She requested an increase in the allocation of funding to the Western Pacific Region to enable further work to be undertaken.

The representative of PERU recognized the Secretariat's efforts to allocate increased funds to all regions, but noted with concern that the Region of the Americas remained the least funded. The gap between the programme budget and its actual financing must therefore be addressed. Both flexible and voluntary funding should be allocated to the Region in line with the approved programme budget, as was the case for the other WHO regions. She also called for a more balanced and effective distribution of flexible, unearmarked funding across the strategic priorities.

The representative of the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC¹ appreciated efforts to finance high-priority outcomes of the Programme budget 2024–2025 and the positive trend towards the allocation of additional resources at the country level. She supported efforts to increase the Organization's accountability, transparency and administrative effectiveness. Although efforts had been made to allocate more funding at the regional level, the Region of the Americas remained the least funded. That imbalance should be rectified. The increase in assessed contributions, the growing trend towards thematic funding and the results of the WHO investment round should lead to a more equitable distribution of funding based on the priorities and needs of each region, in particular the Region of the Americas.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to note the report, as recommended by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.

The Board noted the report.

Sustainable financing: WHO investment round: Item 24.3 of the agenda (documents EB154/29 Rev.1 and EB154/29 Rev.1 Add.1)

The CHAIR drew attention to the report contained in document EB154/29 Rev.1 and invited the Board to consider the draft decision on sustainable financing: WHO investment round contained in paragraph 35 of the report. The financial and administrative implications of the draft decision were contained in document EB154/29 Rev.1 Add.1.

The representative of CHINA, speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, drew attention to the guidance and recommendations proposed by the Committee set out in paragraph 41 of document EB154/4.

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

The representative of FRANCE, expressing strong support for WHO's financial reforms, said that, although the historic decision to increase assessed contributions had been a crucial first step in ensuring the sustainable and effective financing of the Organization, further action was needed. His Government therefore supported the investment round as a means of effectively organizing voluntary contributions and increasing the predictability and flexibility of WHO's funding. He welcomed the possibility of using the contributions from the investment round to help to finance the base segment of the budget.

The representative of DENMARK welcomed efforts to ensure sustainable and predictable financing, which was crucial to enable the Organization to fulfil its core functions and to implement the draft fourteenth general programme of work, 2025–2028. He appreciated the regional consultations and the information provided on the timeline of the WHO investment round and on the base segment of the budget. The investment round must not become an administrative burden for WHO, but rather a way to increase organizational efficiencies and enable it to pursue its goals. The evaluation of the first investment round and continued involvement of Member States in the process would be important in guiding the next steps. He looked forward to further exploring the investment case and to receiving confirmation of the dates of the first investment round.

The representative of ETHIOPIA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, welcomed the Secretariat's efforts and the close consultations with Member States on the investment round, which presented an opportunity to broaden the financing base and ensure sustainable and flexible funding for the base budget. A sustainable financing mechanism was crucial to finding effective, efficient and lasting solutions to gaps in health systems and in activities related to health emergencies. The investment round was also a vital step in ensuring timely, predictable, flexible and sustainable financing to enable the Organization to fulfil its mandate, especially at the country level. He supported the proposal to expand the definition of thematic flexible funding and standardize corporate reporting.

Efforts should be made to engage non-traditional partners, while safeguarding WHO's core values and enforcing the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors. He looked forward to the finalization of the investment case, which should include a clear value proposition for countries to invest in health. High-level advocacy and political engagement, leveraged through regional forums, were also necessary to garner support. To that end, the representation of countries hosting such events and representing the region at the global level should be expanded. He supported the recommendations of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and the draft decision.

The representative of CANADA welcomed the investment round and commended the Secretariat for its efforts to sustainably finance the base budget and broaden the donor base. The strategic direction set out in the draft fourteenth general programme of work underpinned the Organization's investment case and must therefore be clearly reflected, including with regard to WHO's unique added value within the global health ecosystem and its approach to achieving impact at the country, regional and global levels. A strong communication strategy targeted at a broad range of potential investors, including new ones, would be essential in attracting new funding.

The representative of SWITZERLAND commended the proposed investment round plan and welcomed efforts aimed at improving the sustainability, predictability, transparency, effectiveness and flexibility of WHO's financing, which in turn would strengthen the Organization. She appreciated efforts to align the investment round with the draft fourteenth general programme of work and with the investment rounds of other organizations. The investment round must ensure the adequate financing of human resources and of the priorities defined by Member States. In that connection, countries' priorities should be clearly reflected in the programme budget and allocation of funds. Decisions taken on the basis of the draft fourteenth general programme of work must be aligned with the objectives defined by Member States.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that predictable and sustainable funding was critical to enable WHO to carry out its work. She was pleased to note that Member States' feedback had been taken on board in developing the proposed plan for the investment round and looked forward to further consultations in that regard. In particular, the investment case should be refined, and a clear connection established with the draft fourteenth general programme of work. She welcomed the proposal to establish an informal Member State focus group on harmonizing the reporting requirements for donors, which should take into account countries' legal and other requirements. It was also positive that earmarked voluntary contributions would be accepted, as that would allow the participation of all donors. She expressed the hope that the investment round would incentivize both existing and new donors, resulting in the mobilization of additional resources. Work in that area should accurately reflect the broader global agenda, and resource mobilization efforts should be complementary, rather than competitive.

The representative of UKRAINE supported the investment round and the plan for its implementation, which represented a strategic approach to strengthening the global health system; it must result in tangible action. A framework for the predictable and sustainable financing of WHO would ensure that the Organization was not just reactive, but also proactive, and would support it to effectively fulfil its mandate and safeguard global health. The significance of the investment round extended beyond financial considerations by embodying a collective commitment to building health systems that could withstand future challenges.

The representative of JAPAN welcomed the consultations on the investment round, which should continue in order to ensure that all relevant information was shared with Member States. He supported efforts to sustainably finance the Organization. Efficiencies should be presented not only in terms of estimated amounts, but also in easily understandable results. In addition, information on the number of grants managed and the number of reports prepared should be presented as monitoring indicators without set targets.

The representative of the SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, welcomed mechanisms for ensuring the sustainable and predictable financing essential to enable WHO to fulfil its mandate. He appreciated the transparent consultation process on the development of the investment round and highlighted the importance of collaboration on the matter as a means of further strengthening mutual accountability. The diversity among the Member States of the Region presented both obstacles and opportunities in ensuring health care for all. Strong regional and country offices were crucial in order to meet countries' needs and priorities. The link between the investment round and the draft fourteenth general programme of work was therefore particularly important and further details were needed on the operationalization of the results and on the country impact. He endorsed the investment round, which would facilitate resource allocation at the regional and country levels and the implementation of regional resolutions, and also reinforce WHO's normative and technical functions at the global level.

The representative of the DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA welcomed the Secretariat's efforts on financing and implementation of the programme budget. In view of the evolving global health landscape and the importance placed by WHO on collaborative country-level activities, additional funds should be allocated to the country level. Measures should also be established to increase the budget implementation rate and strengthen the monitoring system for programmatic and financial implementation. She acknowledged efforts to enhance resource allocation mechanisms to strengthen the link between financing levels and country offices' prioritization for the biennium 2024–2025.

The representative of TIMOR-LESTE appreciated the Secretariat's efforts to ensure a more participatory approach in the development of the programme budget and the prioritization process. She

supported the full plan for the investment round, which would fully finance the base budget, enhance the sustainability and predictability of WHO's financing at the country level, broaden the donor base and increase the Organization's efficiency.

The representative of CHINA supported the adoption of mechanisms to address WHO's financing. Major contributing countries should increase the flexibility of their funding, and the Secretariat should strengthen coordination with major partners on funding use and allocation. Noting that baselines for key indicators had been established to measure the effectiveness of the proposed WHO investment round, she questioned whether the target values for subsequent rounds were expected to improve. Regular information should be provided on the format of the investment round, on the co-hosting Member States and on plans for regional resource mobilization activities to enable countries to prepare accordingly. Information on the number of full-time staff working on resource mobilization should also be transparent. The Secretariat should clarify how it would evaluate the effectiveness of investment rounds in a timely manner, in accordance with the definition of thematic flexible funding.

The representative of GERMANY¹ expressed strong support for the investment round which, together with an increase in assessed contributions, could address most of WHO's historic structural challenges and would be catalytic for all reforms. It could ensure more flexible and predictable financing and expand the limited donor base, thereby reducing the current risk associated with dependence on a small number of donors. The current financing mechanism was unsustainable and ineffective, with a fragmented resource mobilization process. The investment round represented an improvement on the status quo and could be refined over time. He therefore urged the Executive Board to support the investment round.

The representative of NORWAY¹ said that the investment round would be an important step in providing the Organization with more sustainable financing. Together with the increase in assessed contributions and the implementation of reforms to increase transparency, efficiency and accountability, it would ensure that WHO was fit for purpose. Success criteria should focus on the continued unearmarking of contributions, increased predictability and the acceptance of harmonized reporting. She looked forward to the development of the investment case, which must highlight the return on investment in relation to both WHO's unique normative mandate and its operational work. Welcoming efforts to proactively assess and mitigate the risks related to the investment round, she emphasized the need for strong risk management, control and oversight functions, in addition to a robust culture of integrity. She encouraged all Member States to actively engage in and contribute to the success of the investment round.

The representative of THAILAND¹ appreciated efforts to ensure the sustainable financing of WHO. To further enhance success, WHO should consider the lessons learned from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. In addition, to increase flexibility, at least 15% of funding from voluntary contributions should be flexible and used to fill the funding gap. The effectiveness and timeliness of budget allocations should be measured against the outcomes and outputs of the previous general programme of work. He looked forward to the increased predictability and flexibility in the WHO budget.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND¹ expressed support for the investment round and said that she welcomed the consultations with Member States on its development and looked forward to further consultations on the matter. She also looked forward to receiving additional information on the options to support the investment round,

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

including clear expectations of co-hosts and champions, and on a further articulation of the links between the outputs of the draft fourteenth general programme of work and the investment case. Sustainable and predictable financing was critical to enable the Organization to deliver on its transformation agenda. She encouraged donors to provide more sustainable unearmarked funding as part of the investment round.

The representative of the REPUBLIC OF KOREA¹ appreciated the comprehensive Member State consultations that had informed the plan for the investment round, which would increase the predictability of funding and ensure the sustainable financing of the draft fourteenth general programme of work. He supported programmatic and geographical flexibility of funding and the provision of flexible funds at the country level. WHO should take the lead in building the global health architecture while maintaining momentum on global health security. He looked forward to engaging in consultations on developing a standardized report template to reduce the reporting burden and expressed the hope that the investment round would broaden the donor base and attract financial pledges.

The representative of NAMIBIA¹ supported the robust plan for the investment round, developed in consultation with Member States. He noted with appreciation its alignment with the principles established by the Working Group on Sustainable Financing and its complementarity to the increase in assessed contributions. The securing of sustainable, predictable and flexible financing in support of the draft fourteenth general programme of work was a welcome aim of the investment round. Although sovereign donors would continue to form the backbone of funding, it was important to broaden engagement with non-traditional partners while safeguarding WHO's core values and enforcing the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors.

The representative of the UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA¹ welcomed the investment round as a means of enhancing both the flexibility and sustainability of funding for the draft fourteenth general programme of work. Measures to improve efficiencies in the use of resources, including by reducing fragmentation, were crucial. He therefore advocated for one plan, one budget and one report as a key driver to increase efficiencies and enhance impact. He supported the recommendations of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee on the investment round.

The representative of CHILE,¹ noting the level of resources distributed to the Region of the Americas, asked whether it would be possible to improve the flexibility and equity of the distribution of funding for the period until the year 2030. In particular, she expressed the hope that Latin America, and the Americas in general, would be a key recipient of funding.

The representative of the UNITED NATIONS FOUNDATION, INC., speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, encouraged the Board to unequivocally affirm that flexible, predictable and sustainable financial resources must be ensured for WHO's core capabilities and normative functions. She urged Member States to embrace the investment round as another pathway to ensuring that WHO was not subject to unpredictable funding flows. At the same time, WHO must deliver on its commitment to enhance accountability for its financial and programmatic performance and should remain responsive to Member State and civil society feedback on the issue.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (External Relations and Governance) appreciated the input received in preparing the draft decision on the WHO investment round. She welcomed the broad support expressed for the sustainable financing of WHO and for the investment round as a key and innovative step in that regard. She noted the comments raised on the investment round plan, including

¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

on the financial terms and the optimization of the allocation of resources. The investment case would be closely linked to the general programme of work and the results framework and provide a strong and unique value proposition. She encouraged participation in the informal Member State focus group on harmonizing reporting requirements. The Secretariat would continue to provide updates on the investment round, including on its modalities. Monitoring and evaluation would be based on the indicators developed jointly to measure flexibility, predictability and efficiency. Adoption of the draft decision would set in motion an intense period of preparation for the investment round to set it up for success, for which Member States' continued support would be pivotal.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL said that the proposed investment round would be of historic importance for the Organization. WHO's financing model had been a major structural problem for many years and the investment round would therefore play a catalytic role in all reforms. At the start of the WHO transformation process, many had cautioned against focusing on multiple thematic areas. All areas were structurally interlinked, however, with financing at their centre, and focusing on one or two areas only would not bring about the desired change. For example, sustainable financing was key to achieving results at the country level and for ensuring a motivated and fit-for-purpose workforce. Similarly, flexible funding was essential for impact-focused, data-driven strategies and planning. Collaboration was also key to achieving results, including with the WHO Civil Society Commission and the WHO Youth Council.

Implementing WHO's numerous initiatives across its seven major thematic areas would not be possible without sustainable financing, while making WHO fit for purpose would not be possible without the transformation agenda. Given the interlinkages between areas and the pivotal role of sustainable financing, a holistic approach was required to bring about significant changes. Those changes would result in a better and stronger WHO that would in turn serve people in a better way, in line with Member States' vision for the Organization.

Member States' recognition of the importance of and support for sustainable financing was therefore heartening. The increase in assessed contributions together with the investment round would enable the implementation of WHO's initiatives, which would lead to progress in particular at the country level, where results were needed. He thanked Member States for their support and said that the Secretariat would continue to consult with them on the allocation of funding to ensure that the process was as transparent and accountable as possible. The Secretariat would also engage in open and candid consultations with Member States to resolve any imbalances in funding.

The Board noted the report contained in document EB154/29 Rev.1 and concurred with the guidance and recommendations of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee.

The CHAIR took it that the Board wished to adopt the draft decision on sustainable financing: WHO investment round contained in document EB154/29 Rev.1.

The decision was adopted.¹

Rights of reply

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION,² speaking in exercise of the right of reply, regretted that a number of countries were continuing to use WHO meetings as a platform to attack the Russian Federation. She rejected all allegations concerning the Russian Federation's special military operation in Ukraine. The crisis in Ukraine was the result of Kyiv's eight-year aggression against

¹ Decision EB154(1).

² Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.

residents of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions and its policy to deprive Russian-speaking people of their rights. The Ukrainian military was conducting deliberate attacks on critical civilian infrastructure, including medical and educational facilities. The Russian Federation condemned such attacks. Attacks perpetrated in Moscow and other Russian cities were intended to terrorize the Russian people. The special military operation was therefore necessary in order to demilitarize Ukraine and remove the threats emanating from its territory.

The representative of UKRAINE, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, stated that the comments made by the representative of the Russian Federation were lies. The Russian Federation must stop spreading lies and must leave Ukraine.

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION,¹ speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that President Putin had repeatedly stated that the Russian Federation did not reject negotiations. In the year 2022, Kyiv had been prevented by the West from signing a settlement agreement with the Russian Federation. Responsibility for the continuation of the conflict must be borne by those calling for victory over the Russian Federation on the battlefield. The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy had that day described the aim of such action as the revival of the European defence industry.

The representative of DENMARK, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Union in exercise of the right of reply, noted that lawful arms transfers to Ukraine supported that country's right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. The statement made by the representative of the Russian Federation was intended to distract from the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine and the systematic air strikes that were killing civilians and destroying critical infrastructure. The Member States of the European Union condemned the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, which constituted a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations, and reaffirmed their unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, serenity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized border.

The meeting rose at 18:00.

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¹ Participating by virtue of Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board.