



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

SIXTIETH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

GENEVA, 14–23 MAY 2007

**SUMMARY RECORDS OF COMMITTEES
REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**GENEVA
2008**

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations used in WHO documentation include the following:

ACHR	– Advisory Committee on Health Research	OIE	– <i>Office International des Epizooties</i>
ASEAN	– Association of Southeast Asian Nations	PAHO	– Pan American Health Organization
CEB	– United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (formerly ACC)	UNAIDS	– Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
CIOMS	– Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences	UNCTAD	– United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
FAO	– Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	UNDCP	– United Nations International Drug Control Programme
IAEA	– International Atomic Energy Agency	UNDP	– United Nations Development Programme
IARC	– International Agency for Research on Cancer	UNEP	– United Nations Environment Programme
ICAO	– International Civil Aviation Organization	UNESCO	– United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
IFAD	– International Fund for Agricultural Development	UNFPA	– United Nations Population Fund
ILO	– International Labour Organization (Office)	UNHCR	– Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IMF	– International Monetary Fund	UNICEF	– United Nations Children's Fund
IMO	– International Maritime Organization	UNIDO	– United Nations Industrial Development Organization
INCB	– International Narcotics Control Board	UNRWA	– United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
ITU	– International Telecommunication Union	WFP	– World Food Programme
OECD	– Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	WIPO	– World Intellectual Property Organization
		WMO	– World Meteorological Organization
		WTO	– World Trade Organization

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this volume do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the World Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Where the designation “country or area” appears in the headings of tables, it covers countries, territories, cities or areas.

PREFACE

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 14 to 23 May 2007, in accordance with the decision of the Executive Board at its 118th session. Its proceedings are issued in three volumes, containing, in addition to other relevant material:

Resolutions and decisions, Annexes – document WHASS1/2006–WHA60/2007/REC/1

Verbatim records of plenary meetings, list of participants – document WHASS1/2006–WHA60/2007/REC/2

Summary records of committees, reports of committees¹ – document WHA60/2007/REC/3

¹ The report of the Committee on Credentials presented to the first special session of the World Health Assembly is contained in document WHASS1/2006–WHA60/2007/REC/1.

CONTENTS

	Page
Abbreviations	ii
Preface	iii
Officers of the Health Assembly and membership of its committees	xi
Agenda	xiii
List of documents	xix

PART I

SUMMARY RECORDS OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

GENERAL COMMITTEE

First meeting	3
Second meeting	7
Third meeting	9

COMMITTEE A

First meeting

1. Opening of the Committee	11
2. Organization of work	11
3. Technical and health matters	12
Avian and pandemic influenza	
• Developments, response and follow-up	12
• Application of the International Health Regulations (2005)	12
• Best practice for sharing influenza viruses and sequence data	12

Second meeting

1. Opening of the Committee (continued)	
Election of Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur	20
2. Technical and health matters (continued)	
Avian and pandemic influenza (continued)	20
Smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks	30

	Page
Third meeting	
Technical and health matters (continued)	
Smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks (continued)	34
Control of leishmaniasis	36
Poliomyelitis: mechanism for management of potential risks to eradication	40
Fourth meeting	
Draft Medium-term strategic plan, including Proposed programme budget 2008–2009	
Draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013.....	48
Proposed programme budget 2008–2009	48
Real estate: draft capital master plan	48
Fifth meeting	
1. First report of Committee A	60
2. Draft Medium-term strategic plan, including Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 (continued)	
Eleventh General Programme of Work: monitoring implementation.....	60
3. Technical and health matters (continued)	
Malaria, including proposal for establishment of Malaria Day	62
Sixth meeting	
Technical and health matters (continued)	
Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning.....	73
Seventh meeting	
1. Technical and health matters (continued)	
Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm.....	85
2. Draft Medium-term strategic plan, including Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 (continued)	
Draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 (continued)	95
Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 (continued)	95
Real estate: draft capital master plan (continued).....	95
3. Technical and health matters (resumed)	
Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm (resumed)	101
Eighth meeting	
Technical and health matters (continued)	
Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm (continued)	105
Control of leishmaniasis (continued)	106
Poliomyelitis: mechanism for management of potential risks to eradication (continued)	110
Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning (continued)	111
Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy	115

	Page
Ninth meeting	
1. Second report of Committee A.....	124
2. Technical and health matters (continued)	
Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy (continued)	124
Oral health: action plan for promotion and integrated disease prevention	127
Working towards universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions: biennial report.....	133
Tenth meeting	
1. Third report of Committee A	140
2. Technical and health matters (continued)	
Working towards universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions: biennial report (continued).....	140
Malaria, including proposal for establishment of Malaria Day (continued).....	143
Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning (continued).....	146
Health promotion in a globalized world	149
Integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO: draft strategy.....	156
Eleventh meeting	
Technical and health matters (continued)	
Integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO: draft strategy (continued).....	160
Workers' health: draft global plan of action.....	163
Health systems: emergency-care systems.....	170
Twelfth meeting	
1. Fourth report of Committee A.....	172
2. Technical and health matters (continued)	
Health systems: emergency-care systems (continued)	172
Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy (continued)	178
Health promotion in a globalized world (continued).....	181
Integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO: draft strategy (continued)	184
Workers' health: draft global plan of action (continued).....	185
Strengthening of health information systems	191
Thirteenth meeting	
Technical and health matters (continued)	
Strengthening of health information systems (continued).....	193
Avian and pandemic influenza (continued)	198

	Page
Fourteenth meeting	
1. Fifth report of Committee A.....	204
2. Technical and health matters (continued) Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm (continued).....	204
3. Closure.....	208

COMMITTEE B

First meeting

1. Opening of the Committee	209
2. Organization of work	209
3. Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan	210

Second meeting

1. Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan (continued)	216
2. Financial matters	
Unaudited interim financial report on the accounts of WHO for 2006 and comments thereon made by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board.....	220
Interim report of the External Auditor	220
Status of collection of assessed contributions, including Member States in arrears in the payment of their contributions to an extent that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution	222
Scale of assessments 2008–2009	223
Assessment of new Members and Associate Members	224
Financial period 2006–2007: implementation of resolution WHA58.4.....	224
Amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules	
• Introduction of International Public Sector Accounting Standards.....	224
3. Report of the Internal Auditor	225

Third meeting

1. Financial matters (continued)	
Appointment of the External Auditor	227
2. Staffing matters	
Human resources: annual report	229
Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules	230
Report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board	230
Appointment of representatives to the WHO Staff Pension Committee.....	230
3. Technical and health matters	
WHO's role and responsibilities in health research.....	230

	Page
Fourth meeting	
1. First report of Committee B	233
2. Collaboration within the United Nations system and with other intergovernmental organizations	233
Joint report of the Director-General and the President of the International Narcotics Control Board	237
3. Technical and health matters (continued)	
WHO's role and responsibilities in health research (continued)	237
Progress in the rational use of medicines.....	242
Fifth meeting	
Technical and health matters (continued)	
Progress in the rational use of medicines (continued)	244
Better medicines for children.....	248
Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the Intergovernmental Working Group	252
Sixth meeting	
1. Second report of Committee B	259
2. Technical and health matters (continued)	
Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the Intergovernmental Working Group (continued)	259
Health technologies	267
Better medicines for children (continued)	272
Seventh meeting	
Technical and health matters (continued)	
Better medicines for children (continued)	277
Progress reports on technical and health matters	
G. Sustaining the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders (resolution WHA58.24).....	277
A. Improving the containment of antimicrobial resistance (resolution WHA58.27).....	281
B. Implementation by WHO of the recommendations of the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors (resolution WHA59.12).....	282
C. <i>World report on violence and health</i> : implementation of recommendations	284
D. Promotion of road safety and traffic-injury prevention (resolution WHA57.10).....	285
E. Disability, including prevention, management and rehabilitation (resolution WHA58.23).....	286
F. Cancer prevention and control (resolution WHA58.22): cervical cancer	286
H. Strengthening active and healthy ageing (resolution WHA58.16).....	288
I. Emergency preparedness and response (resolution WHA59.22)	289

	Page
Eighth meeting	
1. Third report of Committee B.....	291
2. Technical and health matters (continued)	
Progress reports on technical and health matters (continued)	
J. Reducing global measles mortality	291
K. Health Metrics Network	293
Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the	
Intergovernmental Working Group (continued)	295
Ninth meeting	
Technical and health matters (continued)	
Health technologies (continued)	296
Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the	
Intergovernmental Working Group (continued)	299
Tenth meeting	
1. Fourth report of Committee B.....	300
2. Technical and health matters (continued)	
Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the	
Intergovernmental Working Group (continued)	300
3. Fifth report of Committee B.....	304
4. Closure	304

PART II

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Committee on Credentials	307
Committee on Nominations	308
General Committee	309
Committee A	310
Committee B	312

OFFICERS OF THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY AND MEMBERSHIP OF ITS COMMITTEES

President

Ms J. HALTON (Australia)

Vice-Presidents

Dr T. ADHANOM (Ethiopia)
Dr C. CHANG (Ecuador)
Dr N.A. HAFFADH (Bahrain)
Dr J. KIELY (Ireland)
Mr KYE CHUN YONG (Democratic
People's Republic of Korea)

Secretary

Dr M. CHAN, Director-General

Committee on Credentials

The Committee on Credentials was composed of delegates of the following Member States: Barbados, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Monaco, Mongolia, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam.

Chairman: Dr A.B.H. AL AMERI (United Arab Emirates)

Vice-Chairman: Mr D. XIMENES (Timor-Leste)

Secretary: Mr G.L. BURCI, Legal Counsel

Committee on Nominations

The Committee on Nominations was composed of delegates of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Argentina, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Qatar, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Suriname, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and Professor P.I. Garrido, Mozambique (President, Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly, ex officio).

Chairman: Professor P.I. GARRIDO (Mozambique)

Secretary: Dr M. CHAN, Director-General

General Committee

The General Committee was composed of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Health Assembly and the Chairmen of the main committees, together with delegates of the following Member States; Botswana, China, Cuba, France, Germany, Guinea Bissau, Jamaica, Latvia, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Paraguay, Russian Federation, Samoa, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand and United States of America.

Chairman: Ms J. HALTON (Australia)

Secretary: Dr M. CHAN Director-General

MAIN COMMITTEES

Under Rule 35 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, each delegation was entitled to be represented on each main committee by one of its members.

Committee A

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

Vice-Chairmen: Dr A. BALBISI (Jordan) and Professor ENG HUOT (Cambodia)

Rapporteur: Mrs G. BU FIGUEROA (Honduras)

Secretary: Dr Q.M. ISLAM, Director, Making Pregnancy Safer

Committee B

Chairman: Mr T. ZELTNER (Switzerland)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr D. FRANCIS (Trinidad and Tobago) and Dr A.A. YOOSUF (Maldives)

Rapporteur: Mr H. bin M. AL-FAKHERI (Saudi Arabia)

Secretary: Dr M.M. DAYRIT, Director, Human Resources for Health

AGENDA¹

PLENARY

1. Opening of the Assembly
 - 1.1 Appointment of the Committee on Credentials
 - 1.2 Election of the Committee on Nominations
 - 1.3 Reports of the Committee on Nominations
 - Election of the President
 - Election of the five Vice-Presidents and Chairmen of the main committees, and establishment of the General Committee
 - 1.4 Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items to the main committees
2. Reports of the Executive Board on its 118th, 119th and 120th sessions
3. Address by Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General
4. Invited speaker
5. [deleted]
6. Executive Board: election
7. Awards
8. Reports of the main committees
9. Closure of the Assembly

¹ Adopted at the second plenary meeting.

COMMITTEE A

10. Opening of the Committee¹
11. Draft Medium-term strategic plan, including Proposed programme budget 2008–2009
 - 11.1 Draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013
 - 11.2 Proposed programme budget 2008–2009
 - 11.3 Real estate: draft capital master plan
 - 11.4 Eleventh General Programme of Work: monitoring implementation
12. Technical and health matters
 - 12.1 Avian and pandemic influenza:
 - Developments, response and follow-up
 - Application of the International Health Regulations (2005)
 - Best practice for sharing influenza viruses and sequence data
 - 12.2 Smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks
 - 12.3 Control of leishmaniasis
 - 12.4 Poliomyelitis: mechanism for management of potential risks to eradication
 - 12.5 Malaria, including proposal for establishment of Malaria Day
 - 12.6 Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning
 - 12.7 Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm
 - 12.8 Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy
 - 12.9 Oral health: action plan for promotion and integrated disease prevention
 - 12.10 Working towards universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions: biennial report
 - 12.11 Health promotion in a globalized world

¹ Including election of Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur.

- 12.12 Integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO: draft strategy
- 12.13 Workers' health: draft global plan of action
- 12.14 Health systems: emergency-care systems
- 12.15 Strengthening of health information systems
- 12.16 WHO's role and responsibilities in health research
- 12.17 Progress in the rational use of medicines
- 12.18 Better medicines for children
- 12.19 Health technologies
- 12.20 Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the Intergovernmental Working Group
- 12.21 Progress reports on technical and health matters
 - A. Improving the containment of antimicrobial resistance (resolution WHA58.27)
 - B. Implementation by WHO of the recommendations of the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors (resolution WHA59.12)
 - C. *World report on violence and health*: implementation of recommendations
 - D. Promotion of road safety and traffic-injury prevention (resolution WHA57.10)
 - E. Disability, including prevention, management and rehabilitation (resolution WHA58.23)
 - F. Cancer prevention and control (resolution WHA58.22): cervical cancer
 - G. Sustaining the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders (resolution WHA58.24)
 - H. Strengthening active and healthy ageing (resolution WHA58.16)
 - I. Emergency preparedness and response (resolution WHA59.22)
 - J. Reducing global measles mortality
 - K. Health Metrics Network

COMMITTEE B

13. Opening of the Committee¹
14. Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan
15. Financial matters
 - 15.1 Unaudited interim financial report on the accounts of WHO for 2006 and comments thereon made by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board
 - 15.2 Interim report of the External Auditor
 - 15.3 Status of collection of assessed contributions, including Member States in arrears in the payment of their contributions to an extent that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution
 - 15.4 [deleted]
 - 15.5 Scale of assessments 2008–2009
 - 15.6 Assessment of new Members and Associate Members
 - 15.7 Appointment of the External Auditor
 - 15.8 Financial period 2006–2007: implementation of resolution WHA58.4
 - 15.9 Amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules
 - Introduction of International Public Sector Accounting Standards
16. Report of the Internal Auditor
17. Staffing matters
 - 17.1 Human resources: annual report
 - 17.2 Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules
 - 17.3 Report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board
 - 17.4 Appointment of representatives to the WHO Staff Pension Committee

¹ Including election of Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur.

AGENDA

18. Collaboration within the United Nations system and with other intergovernmental organizations
 - Joint report of the Director-General and the President of the International Narcotics Control Board

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

A60/1 Rev.1	Agenda ¹
A60/2	Report of the Executive Board on its 118th, 119th and 120th sessions
A60/3	Address by Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General, to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly
A60/4	Awards. Amendments to the Statutes governing the Ihsan Dogramaci Family Health Foundation
A60/5	Real estate: draft capital master plan
A60/6	Eleventh General Programme of Work: monitoring implementation
A60/7	Avian and pandemic influenza: developments, response and follow-up
A60/8	Avian and pandemic influenza: application of the International Health Regulations (2005)
A60/9	Smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks
A60/10	Control of leishmaniasis
A60/11	Poliomyelitis: mechanism for management of potential risks to eradication
A60/12	Malaria, including proposal for establishment of Malaria Day
A60/13	Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning
A60/14	Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm
A60/14 Add.1	Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm. Global assessment of public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol

¹ See page xiii.

A60/15	Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy
A60/16	Oral health: action plan for promotion and integrated disease prevention
A60/17	Working towards universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions: biennial report
A60/18	Health promotion in a globalized world
A60/19	Integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO: draft strategy ¹
A60/20	Workers' health: draft global plan of action
A60/20 Add.1	Report on financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat of resolutions proposed for adoption by the Executive Board or Health Assembly
A60/21	Health systems. Emergency-care systems
A60/22	Strengthening of health information systems
A60/23	WHO's role and responsibilities in health research
A60/24	Progress in the rational use of medicines
A60/25	Better medicines for children
A60/26 and A60/26 Add.1	Health technologies
A60/27	Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the Intergovernmental Working Group
A60/28	Progress reports on technical and health matters
A60/29	Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan
A60/29 Add.1	Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan. Fact-finding report
A60/30	Unaudited Interim Financial Report for the year 2006. Financial period 2006–2007

¹ See document WHASS1/2006–WHA60/2007/REC/1, Annex 2.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

A60/30 Add.1	Unaudited Interim Financial Report for the year 2006. Financial period 1 January 2006 – 31 December 2007. Annex: Extrabudgetary Resources for Programme Activities
A60/31	Interim report of the External Auditor
A60/32 and A60/32 Corr.1	Appointment of the External Auditor
A60/33	Amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules ¹
A60/34	Report of the Internal Auditor
A60/35 and A60/35 Corr.1	Human resources: annual report
A60/36 and A60/36 Corr.1	Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules
A60/37	Report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board
A60/38 Rev.1	Appointment of representatives to the WHO Staff Pension Committee
A60/39	Collaboration within the United Nations system and with other intergovernmental organizations
A60/39 Add.1	Collaboration within the United Nations system and with other intergovernmental organizations. Piloting the One UN Country Programme in eight countries
A60/40	Smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks. Eighth meeting of the WHO Advisory Committee on Variola Virus Research
A60/41	Unaudited interim financial report on the accounts of WHO for 2006 and comments thereon made by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board. First report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly
A60/42	Status of collection of assessed contributions, including Member States in arrears in the payment of their contributions to an extent that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution. Third report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly

¹ See document WHASS1/2006–WHA60/2007/REC/1, Annex 1.

A60/43 and A60/43 Add.1	Financial period 2006–2007: implementation of resolution WHA58.4
A60/44	Assessment of new Member. Assessment of the Republic of Montenegro
A60/45	Interim report of the External Auditor. Second report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly
A60/46	Financial period 2006–2007: implementation of resolution WHA58.4. Fourth report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly
A60/46 Add.1	Report on financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat of resolutions proposed for adoption by the Executive Board or Health Assembly ¹
A60/47	Report of the Internal Auditor. Fifth report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly
A60/48	Eleventh General Programme of Work: monitoring implementation. Sixth report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly
A60/49	Election of Members entitled to designate a person to serve on the Executive Board
A60/50	Committee on Nominations. First report
A60/51	Committee on Nominations. Second report
A60/52	Committee on Nominations. Third report
A60/53	Committee on Credentials. First report
A60/54	First report of Committee A (Draft)
A60/55	First report of Committee B (Draft)
A60/56	Second report of Committee A (Draft)
A60/57	Second report of Committee B (Draft)

¹ See document WHASS1/2006–WHA60/2007/REC/1, Annex 3.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

A60/58	Third report of Committee A (Draft)
A60/59	Fourth report of Committee A (Draft)
A60/60	Third report of Committee B (Draft)
A60/61	Fifth report of Committee A (Draft)
A60/62	Fourth report of Committee B (Draft)
A60/63	Sixth report of Committee A
A60/64	Fifth report of Committee B
A/MTSP/2008–2013/PB/2008–2009, A/MTSP/2008–2013/PB/2008–2009 Corr.1 and Corr.2	Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 and Proposed programme budget 2008–2009

Information documents

A60/INF.DOC./1	Avian and pandemic influenza. Best practice for sharing influenza viruses and sequence data
A60/INF.DOC./2	Collaboration within the United Nations system and with other intergovernmental organizations. Joint report of the Director-General and the President of the International Narcotics Control Board
A60/INF.DOC./3	Real estate: draft capital master plan. Progress report on new building at headquarters
A60/INF.DOC./4	Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan (report of the Director of Health, UNRWA, for 2006)
A60/INF.DOC./5	Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan (report of the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations and Other International Organizations at Geneva)
A60/INF.DOC./6	Status of collection of assessed contributions
A60/INF.DOC./7	Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan (report by the Ministry of Health of Israel)

Diverse

A60/DIV/1 Rev.1	List of delegates and other participants
A60/DIV/2	Guide for delegates to the World Health Assembly
A60/DIV/3	Decisions and list of resolutions
A60/DIV/4	List of documents
A60/DIV/5	[Document not issued]
A60/DIV/6	Address by Mr Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of Norway, at the Sixtieth World Health Assembly
A60/DIV/7	Address by Ms Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund, at the Sixtieth World Health Assembly

PART I

SUMMARY RECORDS OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

GENERAL COMMITTEE

FIRST MEETING

Monday, 14 May 2007, at 12:15

Chairman: Ms J. HALTON (Australia)
President of the Health Assembly

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Document A60/1)

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that, under its terms of reference as defined in Rule 33 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, its first task was to consider item 1.4 (Adoption of the agenda and allocation of items to the main committees) of the provisional agenda, which had been prepared by the Executive Board and issued as document A60/1. The Committee would also consider a proposal for the addition of a supplementary agenda item and the programme of work of the Health Assembly.

Deletion of agenda items

The CHAIRMAN indicated that, if there was no objection, two items on the provisional agenda would be deleted, namely item 5 (Admission of new Members and Associate Members) and item 15.4 (Special arrangements for settlement of arrears [if any]).

Noting that some delegates wished to speak on item 5 and in order to avoid a protracted discussion on the subject, she proposed that the Committee should follow the procedure used at the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly, namely, that two delegates should be invited to speak in favour of the deletion of item 5 and two delegates against.

It was so agreed.

The delegate of PARAGUAY said that his country supported the proposal for a supplementary agenda item: "Request the Director-General to refer Taiwan's membership application to the Assembly for consideration".¹ Item 5 should remain on the agenda. WHO's guiding principle of "health for all" and its constitutional obligations, both of which were recognized by governments throughout the world, made it incumbent on the Organization to ensure that all nations had the means to ensure an appropriate level of health care for their people. The International Health Regulations (2005) underlined the same principle. Jeopardizing the universality of the international system for monitoring diseases by the exclusion of a strategically located country with a population of 23 million would be irresponsible. It would thus be inappropriate for WHO to attach too much weight to political sensitivities. Paraguay, with other Member States, together representing one eighth of the Organization's membership, wished Taiwan to become more involved in WHO's activities, but so far Taiwan had been invited to participate in only 16 out of the 45 technical meetings which it had asked to attend. The Health Assembly should have the opportunity to discuss the possibility of inviting Taiwan to become a full Member of the Organization. He therefore requested the General Committee

¹ Document A60/GC/2.

to recommend the Health Assembly to consider Taiwan's membership application, under agenda item 5.

The delegate of CHINA strongly opposed the proposal for a supplementary agenda item. The Health Assembly was a forum for discussing human health and global health issues and upholding international health security. Member States had a responsibility to ensure that it focused on key issues and used its precious time to serve the health of all humankind. It was regrettable that, prompted by selfish interests, a few countries had chosen to ignore the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly (Resolution 2758 (XXVI)) and the Health Assembly (resolution WHA25.1) by once again proposing the inclusion of a purely political item, namely, Taiwan's application for WHO membership, thereby totally disregarding the will of the majority of Member States. The latest Taiwan-related proposal was the eleventh since 1997. Such proposals might have changed in content and appearance, but their essence remained the same: to insinuate Taiwan into WHO, or the Health Assembly, thereby creating "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan" in the international arena. With its flagrant application for membership under the name of Taiwan, the latest proposal exposed its real intentions: to achieve political aims under cover of health issues. His Government was firmly opposed to such attempts to split China and called upon the General Committee firmly to reject the proposal. The one-China principle was recognized by the General Assembly and the Health Assembly, whose resolutions stipulated that the Government of the People's Republic of China was the sole legitimate representative of China at the United Nations and WHO. WHO's Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly stipulated that only sovereign States were eligible for membership or observer status. As a province of China, Taiwan was not qualified to become a Member or Associate Member of WHO or to attend the Health Assembly as an observer.

The submission of Taiwan-related proposals by any country flouted the relevant international instruments, infringed China's territorial integrity and interfered in its internal affairs. His Government strongly opposed such proposals, as should any government that upheld justice and international order. The continued waste of time and resources and serious disruption of the work of the Health Assembly must be ended. As a matter of principle, attempts to split China should be rejected in order to safeguard WHO's reputation and the common interest of Member States.

A few countries claimed that, without participation in the Health Assembly, Taiwan would be unable to obtain international health information or take part in international health activities, thereby compromising international disease prevention and control. That was a distortion of fact: ample evidence showed that his Government put the interests of the Chinese people, including its Taiwanese compatriots, first. It had enabled Taiwanese health experts to participate in international health cooperation. In 2004, it had put forward four proposals for resolving health issues related to Taiwan,¹ but they had been rejected by the Taiwanese authorities. It had always promoted cross-Straits health exchanges and cooperation and had taken practical steps to protect the health of its Taiwanese compatriots. In 2005, it had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with WHO to facilitate the participation of Taiwanese medical and public health experts in WHO's technical activities; to date 12 groups of Taiwanese experts had taken part in such activities, which included three high-level international meetings on the potential influenza pandemic. A total of 2100 groups of health staff from mainland China and Taiwan had exchanged visits between 1996 and 2006. In November 2005, health institutions on both sides of the Taiwan Strait had set up an information and communication system on infectious diseases, which had subsequently been well used. Health measures were among the outcomes of the third cross-Straits economic, trade and cultural forum (Beijing, 28–29 April 2006).

In view of the forthcoming entry into force of the International Health Regulations (2005), his Government had consulted regularly with the Secretariat on arrangements for their application to Taiwan under the one-China principle, in order to promote further technical cooperation and

¹ Document WHA57/2004/REC/3, summary record of the first meeting of the General Committee, Section 2.

exchanges between Taiwanese health facilities and WHO as well as Taiwan's integration in the global health and epidemic prevention system.

His Government strove to resolve health issues of concern to the Taiwanese population through flexible policies and by enabling Taiwanese technical experts to participate in international health technical and information exchanges, yet the Taiwanese authorities continued to instigate Taiwan-related proposals. Such moves could obstruct the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005). Countries that put forward Taiwan-related proposals should be mindful of their own position and refrain from actions that were contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and WHO's Constitution and could damage their national reputation.

In repeatedly rejecting Taiwan-related proposals, the Health Assembly had safeguarded international order and social justice. The General Committee should continue to do so by rejecting the latest proposal. The General Committee should follow past practice and resolve the issue by approving the Chairman's proposal.

The delegate of GAMBIA, speaking in support of the proposal, said that one of WHO's goals was universal access to health for all, with no regard for geographical and political boundaries. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognized health as a fundamental right and stated that no State Party should infringe the rights of others.

He objected to the improper processing of Taiwan's application, which should have been submitted directly to the Health Assembly, in accordance with Rule 115 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly regarding applications for admission to membership. The Health Assembly should procrastinate no longer. Taiwan satisfied all the criteria for statehood, including a common culture, a territory with defined boundaries and a democratic system of government. It had diplomatic relations and commercial connections with many Member States and provided development assistance to many developing countries. Its continued exclusion from WHO infringed the rights of its 23 million people and was a disservice to the global health system. The expertise, experience and vast resources of Taiwan in the field of health care should be used for the benefit of all humankind. His country and other friends of Taiwan would continue to support the country's campaign for membership of WHO.

The delegate of CUBA expressed surprise at the reappearance of the question of the status of Taiwan, which was a matter for the United Nations rather than WHO. He rejected categorically the proposal to add an item relating to Taiwan to the agenda of the Health Assembly, a proposal that flagrantly violated the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly, the Constitution of WHO and the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly.

For many years, the international community had recognized the People's Republic of China as the legitimate representative of all the Chinese people. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of States were fundamental principles of the United Nations. Taiwan was a province of China and could not claim rights that properly belonged to the national Government. Even allowing it to attend the Health Assembly as an observer would give it an international status to which it was not entitled.

The issue of the representation of China had been settled once and for all by resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Health Assembly. The General Committee should not be called upon to go against those resolutions. WHO's task was to promote the health of all the people of the world, not to engage in political manoeuvring. His Government strongly opposed the proposal.

The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to recommend to the Health Assembly that it delete items 5 (Admission of new Members and Associate Members) and 15.4 (Special arrangements for settlement of arrears [if any]) from the provisional agenda.

It was so agreed.

2. PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEM (Document A60/GC/2)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a proposal submitted by 12 Member States for the inclusion of a supplementary agenda item, in accordance with Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, entitled "Request the Director-General to refer Taiwan's membership application to the Assembly for consideration".

The proposal was similar in nature to item 5 of the provisional agenda, just considered by the Committee. Given its recommendation to delete item 5, and in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of work, the Committee might agree to recommend, without further debate, that the proposed supplementary item should not be included on the agenda.

It was so agreed.

3. ALLOCATION OF ITEMS TO THE MAIN COMMITTEES AND PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY (Documents A60/1 and A60/GC/1)

The CHAIRMAN said that the General Committee's recommendations on agenda item 1, Adoption of the agenda, would be transmitted to plenary later that afternoon. Items 2 to 4 and 6 to 9 would also be taken up in plenary. Given the heavy agenda provisionally allocated to Committee A, she proposed that items 12.16 to 12.21 should be transferred to Committee B.

It was so agreed.

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the preliminary daily timetable. A second meeting of the General Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, 16 May to consider proposals for the election of Members entitled to designate a person to serve on the Executive Board and to review progress and decide on any change in the allocation of items to the committees or alteration in the timetable, if necessary.

The General Committee then drew up the programme of work for the Health Assembly until Wednesday, 16 May.

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to decision EB118(5) whereby the Executive Board had decided that the Sixtieth World Health Assembly should close no later than Wednesday, 23 May 2007.

Referring to the list of speakers for the general discussion of agenda item 3, Address by Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General, she suggested that the list should close at noon on Tuesday, 15 May. In the absence of any objections, she would inform the Health Assembly of those arrangements at the following plenary meeting.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 13:00.

SECOND MEETING**Wednesday, 16 May 2007, at 17:55****Chairman:** Ms J. HALTON (Australia)
President of the Health Assembly**1. PROPOSALS FOR THE ELECTION OF MEMBERS ENTITLED TO DESIGNATE A PERSON TO SERVE ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD (Document A60/GC/3)**

The CHAIRMAN reminded members that the procedure for drawing up the list of proposed names to be transmitted by the General Committee to the Health Assembly for the annual election of Members entitled to designate a person to serve on the Executive Board was governed by Article 24 of the Constitution and by Rule 102 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly.

She recalled that, following the coming into force in 2005 of the amendments to Articles 24 and 25 of the Constitution, the Executive Board consisted of 34 persons designated by as many Members. Accordingly, 12 new Member States had to be nominated.

To help the General Committee in its task, three documents were before it. The first indicated the present composition of the Executive Board by region, on which list were underlined the names of the 12 Members whose term of office would expire at the end of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly and which had to be replaced. The second (document A60/GC/3) contained a list, by region, of the 12 Members that it was suggested should be entitled to designate a person to serve on the Executive Board. The third document tabulated, by region, Members of the Organization that were or had been entitled to designate persons to serve on the Executive Board. Vacancies, by region, were: Africa, 2; the Americas, 3; South-East Asia, 1; Europe, 2; the Eastern Mediterranean, 2; and the Western Pacific, 2.

As no additional suggestion was made by the General Committee, she noted that the number of candidates was the same as the number of vacant seats on the Executive Board. She therefore presumed that the General Committee wished, as was allowed under Rule 80 of the Rules of Procedure, to proceed without taking a vote since the list apparently met with its approval.

There being no objection, she concluded that it was the Committee's decision, in accordance with Rule 102 of the Rules of Procedure, to transmit a list comprising the names of the following 12 Members to the Health Assembly, for the annual election of Members entitled to designate a person to serve on the Executive Board: Bahamas, Indonesia, Malawi, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Sao Tome and Principe, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

It was so agreed.

The delegate of NAMIBIA, referring to the third document, asked what was the reason for the variation in the duration of the term of office shown in the list of Members that were or had been entitled to designate persons to serve on the Executive Board.

The LEGAL COUNSEL pointed out that the choice of candidate differed according to the procedure in each region. In addition there was a practice under which the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council were elected to designate, at an increased frequency, a person to serve on the Board, with different agreements at regional level. Some staggering was introduced when the membership of the Board expanded.

2. ALLOCATION OF WORK TO THE MAIN COMMITTEES AND PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY

The General Committee heard reports from Dr JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar), Chairman of Committee A, and Mr ZELTNER (Switzerland), Chairman of Committee B, on the progress of work in those committees.

The CHAIRMAN proposed to review progress of work with the chairmen of the committees and to revise the programme accordingly, if necessary.

It was so agreed.

The General Committee then drew up the programme of work of the Health Assembly for Thursday, 17 May and Friday, 18 May.

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that it would next meet on Friday, 18 May.

It was so agreed.

The meeting rose at 18:15.

THIRD MEETING**Friday, 18 May 2007, at 18:00****Chairman:** Ms J. HALTON (Australia)
President of the Health Assembly**1. ALLOCATION OF WORK TO THE MAIN COMMITTEES AND PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

The General Committee heard reports from Dr JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar), Chairman of Committee A, and Mr ZELTNER (Switzerland), Chairman of Committee B, on the progress of work in their committees.

The CHAIRMAN observed that Committee A faced a heavy workload but that Committee B was on schedule. She proposed to review the progress of work with the chairmen of the committees and to revise the programme of work accordingly, if necessary.

It was so agreed.

The General Committee then drew up the programme of work for the Health Assembly until Wednesday, 23 May.

2. CLOSURE

After the customary exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRMAN declared the work of the Committee closed.

The meeting rose at 18:10.

COMMITTEE A

FIRST MEETING

Tuesday, 15 May 2007, at 10:40

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

1. OPENING OF THE COMMITTEE: Item 10 of the Agenda

The CHAIRMAN welcomed participants and introduced Dr Antezana Aranibar and Mr Shiraliyev, the two members of the Executive Board who would report on the Board's discussion of each of the agenda items before the Committee.¹ Any views they expressed would be those of the Board, not of their national governments.

He drew the Committee's attention to the proposals by the Committee on Nominations.²

Decision: Committee A elected Dr A. Balbisi (Jordan) and Professor Eng Huot (Cambodia) as Vice-Chairmen and Dr A. Fúnez (Honduras) as Rapporteur.³

(For continuation of the discussion, see summary record of the Committee's second meeting, section 1.)

2. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN observed that the agenda was lengthy, and called upon delegates to restrict their statements to three minutes. Replying to a question from Dr EL SAYED (Egypt), he confirmed that delegates speaking on behalf of a group of countries would be allowed more time.

Mr HOFMANN (Germany), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Union, noted that the European Community and the Member States of the European Union had a shared competence in a number of the matters on the Committee's agenda. He therefore requested that, in accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, the European Commission should participate as an observer, without vote, in the meetings of subcommittees or subdivisions of Committee A dealing with agenda items 12.1 to 12.21 inclusive.

It was so agreed.

¹ By virtue of Rules 44 and 45 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly.

² See page 309.

³ Decision WHA60(4).

3. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda

Avian and pandemic influenza: Item 12.1 of the Agenda

- **Developments, response and follow-up** (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R7, and A60/7)
- **Application of the International Health Regulations (2005)** (Document A60/8)
- **Best practice for sharing influenza viruses and sequence data** (Document A60/INF.DOC./1)

The CHAIRMAN, referring to the draft resolution recommended in resolution EB120.R7, noted that two draft resolutions on the same item had been submitted. The first, proposed by the delegation of the United States of America, read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on avian and pandemic influenza: application of the International Health Regulations (2005);¹

Recalling resolutions WHA58.3 on revision of the International Health Regulations, WHA58.5 on strengthening pandemic-influenza preparedness and response, and WHA59.2 on application of the International Health Regulations (2005);

Recalling in particular the requests to the Director-General in resolution WHA59.2 to collaborate with Member States in developing capacities for a public-health response specific to the risk posed by avian influenza and pandemic influenza, in reasonable stockpiling of necessary drugs and through the facilitation, in collaboration with international partners, of development and commercial production of vaccines against avian influenza and pandemic influenza; and immediately to search for solutions to reduce the current global shortage of, and inequitable access to, influenza vaccines, and also to make them more affordable for both epidemics and pandemics;

Recognizing the crucial role that immediate and unhindered access to influenza viruses plays in enhancing human health security and reaffirming the vital need, as urged in resolution WHA59.2, for Member States to disseminate to WHO collaborating centres information and relevant biological materials related to highly pathogenic avian influenza and other novel influenza virus strains in a timely and consistent manner;

Recognizing further that the failure of Member States to provide all information requested by WHO threatens global health security by hindering risk assessment and reducing the chances for success of preventive action near the start of a pandemic;

Acknowledging the growing concern among Member States at the evolving and unprecedented outbreak of avian influenza due to the H5N1 strain of influenza virus, this represents a potentially serious threat to both human health and global security of all countries;

Noting WHO's global pandemic influenza action plan to increase vaccine supply and its goal of reducing the gap between the potential vaccine demand and supply expected during an influenza pandemic by increasing over the medium- and long-term the supply of pandemic vaccine;²

Mindful that support to Member States in response to avian influenza or pandemic influenza events will be enhanced through timely access to safe and effective pandemic influenza vaccines by affected developing countries that could lack capacity to produce influenza vaccine,

¹ Document A60/8.

² Document WHO/IVB/06.13–WHO/ODS/EPR/GIP/2006.1.

1. URGES Member States:
 - (1) to meet the short-term need for access to vaccine developed before and during a pandemic by supporting and strengthening mechanisms, including the stockpiling of candidate H5N1 vaccines, for increasing access to vaccine for developing countries without influenza-vaccine production capacity, through various means, including, but not limited to, financial and technical support, and in-kind donations;
 - (2) to strengthen the capacity of their national regulatory authorities in order to carry out efficiently and effectively the necessary measures for the rapid approval of safe and effective candidate influenza vaccines for use before and during a pandemic;
 - (3) to continue unrestricted sharing of influenza viruses with WHO collaborating centres and H5 reference laboratories in a timely and consistent manner for the purpose of risk assessment and the development of pandemic and pre-pandemic candidate vaccines;
 - (4) to formulate policies on influenza vaccines as an integral part of their national influenza-pandemic preparedness plans;
 - (5) to work to build the necessary capacity in-country for effective surveillance, vaccine production, and deployment strategies.
2. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to mobilize financial and technical support from Member States, vaccine manufacturers, development banks, charitable organizations and private donors in order to help to establish a stockpile of a safe and effective H5N1 influenza vaccine;
 - (2) to design mechanisms to promote increased access to influenza vaccine, in particular for developing countries without vaccine-production capacity;
 - (3) to promote the broadest possible access to practical products, including pandemic-influenza vaccines, resulting from research on influenza viruses, including the H5N1 strain;
 - (4) to appoint an ad hoc WHO working group to advise Member States and the Director-General on:
 - (a) the most appropriate size of a stockpile of candidate H5N1 vaccines;
 - (b) operational procedures, based on expert guidance and evidence, for using such an H5N1 vaccine stockpile most effectively;
 - (c) mechanisms to promote access to safe and effective pandemic-influenza vaccine;
 - (5) to explore options to establish a stockpile of candidate H5N1 vaccines as an interim measure, pending completion of the report of the working group referred to in subparagraph (4), in order to enable increased access to safe and effective H5N1 vaccine and to ensure maximum flexibility in its maintenance, monitoring and deployment;
 - (6) to complete the WHO guidelines on regulatory preparedness for human pandemic-influenza vaccines;
 - (7) to provide technical support to Member States, upon request, to increase capacity for vaccine development and production, and strengthen their regulatory pathways for licensing and approving seasonal and pandemic-influenza vaccines that are safe and effective;
 - (8) to facilitate broader and more equitable regional distribution of production capacity for influenza vaccine and increased production capacity for pandemic vaccines by leading implementation of the global pandemic influenza action plan to increase vaccine supply, emphasizing those activities that help to increase access to pandemic vaccines in developing countries and other countries that lack domestic manufacturing capacity;
 - (9) to identify and recommend possible options for promoting the accessibility of pandemic-influenza vaccine to all, and provide support, as appropriate, for their implementation, for example by mobilizing adequate funding for research on, and development of, a pandemic-influenza vaccine;

- (10) to continue to work with Member States on studies of disease burden in order to determine whether seasonal influenza vaccine should be introduced into their national immunization schedules;
- (11) to continue to explore with Member States the potential for the conversion of existing biological facilities, such as those for the production of veterinary vaccines, so as to meet the standards for the development and production of human vaccines, thereby increasing the availability of pandemic vaccine;
- (12) to report to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board, on the results of the working group and implementation of this resolution.

The second draft resolution, proposed by the delegations of Algeria, Brunei Darussalam, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Solomon Islands, Sudan and Timor-Leste, read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the Jakarta Declaration on Responsible Practices for Sharing Avian Influenza Viruses and Resulting Benefits and the recommendations by the High-Level Meeting on Responsible Practices for Sharing Avian Influenza Viruses and Resulting Benefits (Jakarta, 26–28 March 2007);

Aware that industrialized countries have greater means at their disposal to offer protection to their populations than developing countries which lack medical supplies, including diagnostics, vaccines and medicines in sufficient quantities and at an affordable price, and that this reduced availability hampers access to those in need, particularly in affected countries that have contributed significantly by providing the viruses for vaccine production;

Underlining that global risk assessment and response to the threat of pandemic influenza, including avian influenza, require concerted efforts among Member States, international partners, including organizations in the United Nations system, donor agencies, manufacturing industries and civil society organizations;

Acknowledging with appreciation the role and contribution of affected countries in their voluntary sharing of materials, which are fundamental to the research on and analysis and use of influenza viruses and parts thereof, including genes, gene sequences and derivatives; and that developing countries should be supported to build the capacity for research and development and to produce vaccines so as better to ensure adequacy of supplies, especially in the event of a pandemic;

Stressing the need for transparent, fair and equitable international mechanisms for the distribution of affordable diagnostics and treatments, including vaccines, to those in need, especially in developing countries, in a timely manner;

Recalling that the Convention on Biological Diversity reaffirms that “States have sovereign rights over their own biological resources”, recognizes that “the authority to determine access to genetic resources rests with the national governments and is subject to national legislation” and states that “access where granted shall be on mutually agreed terms, subject to prior informed consent of the Contracting Party providing such resources ...”

Recalling further that the Convention of Biological Diversity recognizes “sharing in a fair and equitable way the results of the research and development and the benefits arising from the commercial and other utilization of genetic resources with the Contracting Party providing such resources” on “mutually agreed terms”;

Recalling also that the Convention of Biological Diversity establishes that “Each Contracting Party shall endeavour to develop and carry out scientific research based on genetic resources provided by other Contracting Parties with the full participation of, and where possible in, such Contracting Parties”,

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to continue to support, strengthen and improve the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network in order to ensure the transparent, fair and equitable sharing of benefits, arising from the generation of information, diagnostics, medicines, vaccines and other technologies, through frameworks and mechanisms that strongly emphasize the principles of prior informed consent and the need for developing countries to benefit also from the timely sharing and dissemination of information, data and biological specimens, benefits that include in particular the development and production of influenza vaccines that are accessible to, and affordable by, all countries, with a view to accelerating local, regional and global preparedness and response to the threat of pandemic avian influenza;
- (2) to build on WHO's global pandemic influenza action plan to increase vaccine supply in order to ensure adequate supplies of vaccines, medicines, diagnostics and other relevant medical supplies in a timely manner and at affordable prices in developing countries, in particular the affected countries;
- (3) to prioritize the needs of developing countries, in particular developing countries affected by influenza, ensuring that they have access to vaccines, diagnostics, medicines and other medical supplies in sufficient quantities and at a price affordable for those in need;
- (4) to prioritize distribution of vaccines to affected countries, while also supporting the global stockpiling of vaccines;
- (5) to take the necessary measures to ensure compliance with principles in paragraph 2(1) below, to ensure timely and equitable sharing of influenza viruses and sequence data.

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to launch an inclusive, participatory intergovernmental process in order to review existing practices and mechanisms for sharing influenza viruses, to establish new frameworks and mechanisms, including principles and guidelines for sharing influenza viruses and parts thereof (encompassing genes, gene sequences, derivatives and parts thereof), based on prior informed consent of the country contributing the viruses and parts thereof, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits resulting from the use of the viruses and any parts thereof with the country contributing the viruses, and to review existing terms of reference of WHO collaborating centres and H5 reference laboratories on the basis of the following principles:
 - (a) any international sharing of biological materials with WHO collaborating centres/H5 reference laboratories shall be conducted in accordance with national and international laws and regulations, through agreements on mutually agreed terms, based on the principles of prior informed consent, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits;
 - (b) transfer of any virus and parts thereof (including genes, sequences, derivatives and parts thereof) by a receiving WHO collaborating centre or a H5 Reference Laboratory to another WHO collaborating centre or H5 Reference Laboratory shall be effected on the same terms as the initial agreement entered with the country contributing the virus and parts thereof; the country contributing the virus and parts thereof shall be informed by way of a written notification prior to any such transfer;
 - (c) any vaccines, diagnostics, antiviral agents and other medical supplies arising from the use of the virus and parts thereof (including its genes, sequences, derivatives and parts thereof) must be made available at an affordable price and in a timely manner to developing countries, particularly to those under the most serious threat of, or already experiencing, a pandemic;

- (d) priority should be given to conducting the necessary research on the viruses and parts thereof and to storing the viruses in the affected countries, and WHO should make arrangements for countries to have that capacity;
 - (e) any uses of the influenza viruses and parts thereof, including genes, sequences, derivatives and parts thereof, provided to WHO collaborating centers and H5 reference laboratories shall be within their WHO mandates, and in any event limited to scientific research in the interests of public health and to noncommercial purposes;
 - (f) no viruses/specimens or parts thereof, including genes, sequences derivatives and parts thereof, shall be distributed, nor shall access to the viruses and parts thereof be given, to any party outside the network of WHO collaborating centre/H5 reference laboratories without the written prior informed consent of the country contributing the virus and parts thereof;
 - (g) WHO collaborating centres/H5 reference laboratories shall obtain written prior informed consent from co-authors before publishing findings obtained from the analysis of the relevant viruses/specimens and parts thereof or placing any of the sequence results in public databases;
 - (h) appropriate terms and conditions shall govern access to influenza-related information (including sequences) in any public databases in order to ensure that such information is not appropriated in a manner that prevents others access to, and use of, the information and products, technologies and tools developed through the use of the information, or that denies the appropriate parties fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the commercial or other use of information placed in the databases;
 - (i) WHO collaborating centres, H5 reference laboratories, their employees and any other entity involved in the execution of WHO's mandate for the centres or the Laboratories, shall neither claim nor obtain any form of proprietary rights over the virus provided or any parts thereof, including genes, sequences, recombinant virus, derivatives and parts thereof; except with the explicit written prior informed consent of the country contributing the virus and parts thereof;
 - (j) the country contributing the virus and parts thereof and whose prior informed consent is required for the above-mentioned and other activities shall be entitled to establish conditions accompanying any decision on consent, which may include arrangements for sharing, of benefits, which may include access to sufficient quantities of vaccine and other medical supplies at affordable prices for itself and other developing countries, transfer of technology and know-how to strengthen manufacturing capacity and other capacity-building activities, or that may be specified in national or international regulations;
- (2) immediately to intensify, in a manner appropriate to the situation in each developing country and particularly in those countries affected by the H5N1 influenza viruses or those that have high risk due to geographical proximity, capacity-building activities related but not limited to virus identification, virus characterization, identification of new virus strains, generation and interpretation of data on or related to influenza and avian influenza, and generation of seed virus for vaccine production;
 - (3) to decide, in consultation with developing countries, those capacities that should be strengthened or built within each specific country;
 - (4) to take immediate actions to provide more developing countries, particularly those who have been affected by the H5N1 virus or are at high risk due to geographical proximity, with additional capacity building, in order better to contribute to WHO's global influenza surveillance activities, and to enable them to be designated as H5 reference laboratories;
 - (5) to seek the support of industrialized countries, other financial partners and vaccine manufacturers in mobilizing financial and technical support for stockpiling safe and

effective H5N1 and other potential pandemic-influenza vaccines that may be used in developing countries, particularly those that have been affected by influenza or have high risk due to geographical proximity, and for providing the necessary means to developing countries that choose to establish a stockpile of vaccines or other medical supplies;

(6) to seek additional support from developed countries, funding partners and vaccine manufacturers to facilitate the transfer to developing countries of the technology and know-how necessary to establish influenza-vaccine production and to enable production capacity to be functional as soon as possible;

(7) through an intergovernmental process to discuss and formulate mechanisms and guidelines for the fair and equitable distribution of effective pandemic-influenza vaccines in the event of a pandemic in order to ensure timely availability of such vaccines in developing countries;

(8) to report on the implementation of this resolution and submit the outcome of the intergovernmental process to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly in May 2008, through the Executive Board.

Mr SHIRALIYEV (representative of the Executive Board) said that the Board, at its 120th session,¹ had welcomed the progress made in pandemic preparedness and dealing with the continuing outbreaks of avian influenza, and had stressed the sharing of important public health information and support for the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network. Several Board members had expressed concerns about access to limited vaccine supplies and geographical inequalities in laboratory capacities, and had requested the Secretariat to consider and promote other public health measures in the event of shortages of antiviral medicines and vaccines. Several members had briefly reported on the progress made in their countries in implementing the International Health Regulations (2005). Member States that had not yet established national focal points had been urged to do so as soon as possible. The Board recommended that the Health Assembly adopt the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R7.

Dr HEYMANN (Assistant Director-General) said that influenza vaccines, unlike those against poliomyelitis, measles and yellow fever, were made from an unstable virus and their formulation required periodic updating. For 50 years, a WHO-coordinated network had shared seasonal influenza viruses and, each year, had issued recommendations on composition of vaccines against seasonal influenza. The demand for those vaccines had existed only in industrialized countries and in a few developing countries, whereas H5N1 and pandemic-influenza vaccines would be needed by all countries. From recent consultations with Member States the Secretariat understood that developing countries were seeking assurances that: virus sharing in the WHO network was transparent; their scientists could participate as equal partners in the WHO H5 reference laboratories and in research other than that conducted routinely by the virus-sharing network; and they would have broader access to H5N1 and pandemic-influenza vaccines. Activities to address those issues included discussions with manufacturers of influenza vaccines, and the Secretariat would continue to facilitate consultations with Member States on virus sharing.

Dr KANDUN (Indonesia) said that the second draft resolution, which he introduced on behalf of its 17 cosponsors, was based on the Jakarta Declaration on Responsible Practices for Sharing Avian Influenza Viruses and Resulting Benefits (28 March 2007). The current system for sharing viruses was unfair. Developing countries voluntarily provided viruses to WHO collaborating centres and reference laboratories, institutions that were supposed to manage the virus samples in trust for research. However, samples of the viruses or parts thereof had been received by companies free of charge and used for commercial purposes without the country that had provided the virus being first informed or

¹ Document EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/2, summary record of the third meeting, section 2.

its consent sought. Most importantly, there was no mechanism to ensure that developing countries would have affordable and timely access to the vaccines produced. The draft resolution aimed to establish a framework and mechanism for the transparent, fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the generation of information, diagnostics, medicines, vaccines and other technologies. The framework must prioritize the needs of developing countries, particularly affected countries, and ensure access to vaccines, diagnostics, medicines and other medical supplies at affordable prices. The Director-General was requested to initiate an intergovernmental process in order to review existing mechanisms for sharing influenza viruses and to establish new frameworks based on principles that conformed to national and international laws on biological resources, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (2001).

Indonesia had also proposed amendments to the draft resolution recommended in resolution EB120.R7, and a review of the report on best practice for sharing influenza viruses and sequence data (document A60/INF.DOC./1).

Mr LANGE (United States of America), introducing the first draft resolution, said that international preparation for, and response to, pandemic influenza required the high-level and sustained attention of all Member States and the Secretariat. The United States was committed to working with all stakeholders in order to prevent an influenza pandemic or mitigate its effects should one occur, and to supporting developing countries' preparedness. Member States had a responsibility to share virus samples and sequence data promptly, and report human and animal cases of H5N1 influenza and of seasonal or other novel influenzas immediately and in a transparent manner. The Secretariat, in collaboration with FAO and OIE, should redouble efforts to support Member States in those activities. Adherence to the best practices recommended in document A60/INF.DOC./1 would facilitate sharing.

Current vaccine-production capacity was insufficient to meet global needs, especially in developing countries, in the event of a pandemic. Implementation of WHO's action plan to increase vaccine supply should be accelerated. However, such efforts should not compromise the integrity of the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network, which was vital for surveillance, risk assessment, and countermeasures. He supported the current framework for sample sharing and opposed any new encumbrances or material-transfer agreements to govern the sharing of influenza virus samples.

In order to contain or mitigate a pandemic, the finalization of WHO's protocol for rapid response and containment should therefore be given the highest priority. The United States was already implementing the International Health Regulations (2005) ahead of their entry into force in June 2007, and urged all Member States to do likewise. He supported the draft resolution recommended in resolution EB120.R7 and urged its adoption without substantive change.

The United States had been involved informally in the influenza-related draft resolutions, and he proposed that a working group should be established in order to consider the issue.

Dr MONGKOL NA SONGKHILA (Thailand), supporting the concerns raised by the delegate of Indonesia, suggested that the Health Assembly should review the mechanisms governing virus-sample sharing. It was unfair that a developing country that had provided samples was subsequently offered vaccines at an unaffordable price. The current situation resulted from the limited global capacity for influenza vaccine production. The shortfall between potential demand and supply in the event of a pandemic would leave millions of people, especially in developing countries, without access to effective vaccines. Developed countries were stockpiling H5N1 vaccine through advance market commitment, leaving developing countries on the waiting list. WHO should mobilize resources for a collective vaccine stockpile for developing countries.

Individual national measures might prove dangerous and ineffective. The world needed a common defence mechanism. With the collaboration of the governments of Japan and the United States of America and the Asian Development Bank, WHO should support developing countries in setting up national vaccine production. Mechanisms (for example, differential pricing) were needed in order to enable poorer countries to purchase vaccine and to ensure equitable distribution of the

vaccines generated from the seed virus provided by affected countries. The relations between relevant WHO collaborating centres, H5 reference laboratories and the vaccine-production industry should therefore be reviewed. The industry was an important partner in making the vaccine available to all but it should be socially accountable and not derive excessive benefit from the work of the Global Influenza Surveillance Network.

He supported the United States' proposal to establish a drafting group. Its remit should be to draft a single resolution that took into account the existing texts, including that recommended in resolution EB120.R7, the recommendations of the Jakarta High-Level Meeting on Responsible Practices for Sharing Avian Influenza Viruses and Resulting Benefits, and the concerns expressed by Member States.

The meeting rose at 11:30.

SECOND MEETING

Tuesday, 15 May 2007, at 14:40

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

1. OPENING OF THE COMMITTEE (Item 10 of the Agenda) (continued)

Election of Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur (Document A60/52) (continued from the first meeting, section 1)

The CHAIRMAN announced that Dr Fúnez (Honduras), whom the Committee had elected to serve as its Rapporteur, was unable to attend the Health Assembly. Since it was therefore necessary to elect a different Rapporteur, he proposed Mrs Bu Figueroa (Honduras) for the post.

Decision: Committee A elected Mrs G. Bu Figueroa (Honduras) as Rapporteur.¹

2. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Avian and pandemic influenza: Item 12.1 of the Agenda (continued from the first meeting, section 3)

- **Developments, response and follow-up** (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R7 and A60/7) (continued from the first meeting, section 3)
- **Application of the International Health Regulations (2005)** (Document A60/8) (continued from the first meeting, section 3)
- **Best practice for sharing influenza viruses and sequence data** (Document A60/INF.DOC./1) (continued from the first meeting, section 3)

Professor HORVATH (Australia) strongly supported the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance System. It allowed free sharing of international specimens and sequences, was essential for early warning of effective human-to-human transmission and the commencement of a pandemic, and was important for the development of effective diagnostic tests and pharmaceutical countermeasures.

He understood the position of developing countries that considered that, although they contributed to the international virus-sharing system, they did not receive a fair share of the vaccines and medicines developed as a result. There were no ready solutions, given that global manufacturing capacity for the pandemic influenza vaccine was only in the order of 500 million doses per annum, whereas demand was likely to be billions of doses; equally, no country could afford to rely on pharmaceutical measures alone but would need to institute measures such as infection control and isolation of cases.

¹ Decision WHA60(4).

Given the ease and speed with which communicable diseases could spread over international borders, a pandemic must be contained at an early stage, wherever it originated. Therefore, the international community, led by WHO, had been working in a concerted manner in order to respond to pre-pandemic and pandemic avian influenza. Similarly, Australia had been working with regional countries in order to build laboratory, surveillance and response capacity. WHO had established a global stockpile of antiviral medicines and Australia would consider requests from other countries for access to its stockpile. Australia strongly supported WHO's global pandemic influenza action plan to increase vaccine supply and looked forward to the early finalization of proposals.

Given the range of draft resolutions put forward and the importance of a cooperative approach, he supported the proposal to convene a drafting group.

Dr ALLAH KOUADIO (Côte d'Ivoire), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, recalled that five years had passed since the detection of the first human case of H5N1 virus infection. By the end of 2006, 59 countries had notified foci of avian influenza, and the number of human cases of avian influenza had reached 291 in April 2007 (with 178 deaths). In Africa foci of avian influenza had been reported in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Niger and Nigeria, with 36 human cases. The recent cases of humans infected after contact with sick patients presaged human-to-human transmission. The threat of a pandemic was real, even if adaptation of the virus and its virulence in humans had not yet been clearly demonstrated.

Steps taken on the African continent to combat avian influenza included drafting of contingency plans, incorporating early warning; harmonization of action plans at the United Nations Regional Meeting on Avian Influenza in Africa (Libreville, 20–22 March 2006); establishment of interministerial committees; development of tools for notification of suspected cases; training of relevant personnel and sharing of information between countries; strengthening of surveillance, which had allowed for timely culling of infected birds and payment of compensation to breeders; establishment of a subregional mechanism for coordinating prevention and response measures and of a subregional emergency fund following the Ministerial Meeting on a Regional Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Avian Influenza in West Africa (Abuja, 20–23 June 2006); and mobilization and coordination of donor support. At the same time, he questioned the capability of Africa's surveillance systems and laboratories to detect an emerging pandemic and to diagnose cases of pandemic influenza correctly. Did African countries have the resources to implement their plans of action or the capacity to conduct vaccine research, and were their communication strategies relevant? Resource mobilization had not matched expectations.

He supported the agreement reached at the High-level Meeting on Responsible Practices for Sharing Avian Influenza Viruses and Resulting Benefits in March 2007 regarding the manufacture of vaccines, their affordability for developing countries and increased international solidarity.

He invited those present to support the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R7.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in accordance with the request from Member States, a drafting group be formed in order to consolidate the two proposed draft resolutions with the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R7.

Mr SAADAT (Islamic Republic of Iran) questioned the advisability of forming a drafting group until a diversity of views from more countries and regions had been heard.

The CHAIRMAN explained that the group would be formed later that afternoon, following further interventions on the matter.

Mr HOFMANN (Germany) spoke on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. The candidate countries Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova aligned themselves

with his statement. He appreciated the progress already made in the field of influenza pandemic preparedness.

The European Union had contributed to the global conferences on avian and pandemic influenza. Comprehensive surveillance of human and animal influenza and timely sharing of information and specimens in full transparency were essential to pandemic preparedness and a precondition for WHO to carry out its mandate under the International Health Regulations (2005). Information collection and sharing in some affected countries needed improvement, and all partners should cooperate without restriction.

He appreciated WHO's collaboration with the Office of the United Nations System Senior Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza and other international partners in limiting the global transmission of the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus in poultry, especially in developing countries, and thus preventing the emergence of pandemic influenza. WHO should continue to organize meetings aimed at increasing the access of developing countries to pandemic vaccines. Effective implementation of WHO's global pandemic influenza action plan to increase vaccine supply depended on the combined efforts of governments, international organizations, affected countries and industry. Coordination needed to be strengthened between international organizations in pandemic preparedness planning, particularly at country level, under the leadership of the Office of the United Nations System Senior Coordinator. Capable health systems were a prerequisite for preparedness, and additional support in terms of human, financial and material resources was therefore essential. Sound and evidence-based communication to the public was important.

He supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R7 and the proposal to form a drafting group.

Professor FAIZ (Bangladesh) said that in his country avian influenza had been detected in poultry in farms. The virus had been successfully contained through the culling of 100 000 chickens. A national avian influenza and human pandemic influenza preparedness plan had been adopted. Some training of health professionals had already been undertaken, and logistics and antivirals had been prepared for future human cases.

The sharing of viruses and the development of vaccines should be reciprocal, with the consent of the "donor" country being obtained by mutual agreement, in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992). The vaccines produced should be made available to developing countries; to that end, the technical facilities for production in donor countries should contain costs within an affordable range.

Dr AL-SALEH (Kuwait) requested that the relevant draft resolutions should emphasize assistance to developing countries in producing vaccines and encourage WHO regional offices to bring together the vaccine-producing countries in each region in order to stockpile vaccines, with the financial and technical support of developed countries.

Dr GANGULY (India) said that India had been sharing strains of seasonal influenza virus through the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network for many years. Information sharing was crucial for influenza surveillance. India currently had about 50 strains of H5N1 virus which it had sequenced completely. He was concerned, however, that India might be denied access to any products developed as a result of the sharing of those virus strains because of their prohibitive cost. That had happened with the seasonal influenza vaccine, of which India could afford to purchase only 130 000 doses a year. He was also concerned about the intellectual property issues surrounding H5N1 vaccine research and development. Manufacturing companies in India and several other countries were interested in developing H5N1 vaccines in order to ensure affordable access in countries affected by avian influenza, but they might be prevented from doing so because of patent or licensing requirements. Nonetheless, in an emergency, countries that needed vaccines should be able to make them, irrespective of patent.

He proposed that an expert committee should be set up in order to examine in depth all the issues related to virus sharing, information sharing and vaccine research and production, and to

recommend solutions that would guarantee access to the resulting products for developing countries. Also, WHO should develop rules or mechanisms for ensuring compliance with any guidelines on the sharing of influenza viruses and the resulting benefits.

Dr METAI (Kiribati) welcomed WHO's work on the strengthening of vaccine production. Potential shortages of vaccine seriously concerned vulnerable small countries such as Kiribati. WHO should make full use of the technical expertise and experience of all countries, including those non-Member States of WHO that had the capability to produce vaccine and had demonstrated their competence in similar pandemics. He supported the sharing of H5N1 virus stock, but for health purposes only.

He also supported the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) with effect from June 2007, but, like other small Member States, Kiribati might not be able to make all the required adjustments in time, owing to resource constraints. His country would be grateful for any assistance that WHO could provide in mobilizing resources.

Ms PINTO FERNÁNDEZ (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) requested information on the results of the pandemic vaccine research mentioned in document A60/7 and on the Organization's position on those studies. She supported the draft resolution on responsible practices for sharing avian influenza viruses and resulting benefits, particularly access to vaccines, medicines, diagnostics and other medical supplies in developing countries. She emphasized equity in the supply, distribution and cost of vaccines and regulating the manufacture and distribution of vaccines, as pandemic influenza was an international public health issue that took precedence over any private commercial interests.

Venezuela was implementing the International Health Regulations (2005) in response to the risk posed by avian influenza. Instruments for assessing the core capacities of ports and airports had been designed and tested, and national IHR focal points had been designated. An avian influenza preparedness plan had been developed with interministerial partnerships. The plan had five components: promotion of best practices in poultry production; epidemiological surveillance of both animals and humans; prevention and containment; health system response; and information and communication. Surveillance of acute respiratory infections had been strengthened. Diagnosis was currently carried out by the national influenza centre, but would be decentralized to sentinel surveillance posts.

Mr DANKOKO (Senegal) said that Senegal had established a committee for the prevention and control of avian influenza and a national plan to combat the disease. The objectives were to strengthen health security and to protect the agricultural economy through surveillance, prevention and response to the potential introduction and spread of avian influenza. Specific objectives and strategies were set out for the health sector.

In February 2006 the President of Senegal had hosted a meeting of West African countries in order to share experiences, coordinate efforts and mobilize technical and financial partners. To date, the H5N1 virus had not been detected in Senegal, but the country was nevertheless strengthening its surveillance and its collaboration with other countries. He supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R7.

Dr AYDINLI (Turkey) underlined the need to increase the supply of, and access to, pandemic influenza vaccines. WHO should keep the international community informed of the results of research on influenza viruses, including H5N1. His country's experience in 2006 showed the importance of rapid clinical and epidemiological investigation of human infections and sharing the findings with WHO and the international community. Transparency by all countries was vital for global and coordinated alert, response, standards and vaccine research. Information exchange would contribute much to the fight against the H5N1 virus and to vaccine development. However, WHO should establish mechanisms so that countries that provided information would have access to newly developed vaccines and techniques. He supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R7 and the establishment of a drafting group.

Professor HOUSSIN (France) said that the exchange of information, for instance on circulating virus strains, was crucial to an effective international response to the risk of an avian influenza pandemic. It was a collective obligation and responsibility of all Member States under the revised International Health Regulations (2005). When the new Regulations entered into force as scheduled in June 2007, all countries should take on those obligations and thus fully benefit from enhanced international health security. In order to ensure rapid and effective implementation of the Regulations, WHO should make available multilingual guidelines, such as guides to hygiene and sanitation in ships and planes, as soon as possible. France awaited the release of the strategic plan for implementing the Regulations mentioned in document A60/8.

France supported pre-pandemic stockpiling of H5N1 vaccine, especially in South-east Asia and Africa, in order to enable affected countries to tackle a pandemic, and the provision of assistance in vaccine manufacturing capacity. France would continue to collaborate with the Secretariat, other countries and the pharmaceutical industry in order to increase the availability of vaccines, especially in affected developing countries. He supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R7 but was willing to discuss the other two draft resolutions.

Mr SAADAT (Islamic Republic of Iran) recalled that his country had cosponsored the draft resolution on responsible practices for sharing avian influenza viruses and resulting benefits. Research on, and use and availability of, genetic resources, including viruses, were crucial for improving public health and countries that shared genetic resources contributed to the global research agenda. Nevertheless, States had a sovereign right over their genetic resources, including viruses, and such resources should only be shared on agreed terms and with the prior consent of the government concerned. The country of origin should share equitably the benefits derived from use of genetic resources, including commercial benefits, information exchange, technology transfer and capacity building. Developing countries, in particular countries of origin of genetic resources, should be assisted in developing the capacities for research and development and producing the vaccines required to respond to a pandemic. A transparent system for access to affordable diagnostics and treatments, including vaccines, and continued availability of genetic resources were essential. He urged support for the draft resolution proposed by Indonesia and its cosponsors.

He had taken note of the submission of a reservation to the application of the International Health Regulations (2005) by one Member State pointing out that implementation of, and compliance with, the Regulations would be conditional on the principles of federalism. Full compliance with the Regulations should apply to all Member States. Iran had objected to that reservation in a note to the Director-General dated 20 April 2007. He was confident that the Director-General had circulated the text of his Government's objection in accordance with the provisions of Article 62 of the Regulations.

Mrs NICOLAI (Netherlands) said that, without thorough preparation at both national and international levels, an influenza pandemic could be devastating. The central role of WHO in the preparation process was welcome. However, the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R7 insufficiently reflected two essential elements. The human population was prone to other infectious diseases, due to existing human pathogens that changed characteristics over time, such as multidrug-resistant bacteria, and animal pathogens that adapted to the human species, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome. Influenza pandemic preparedness should therefore include the enforcement of generic infectious-disease preparedness. Greater emphasis needed to be put on non-pharmaceutical interventions that aimed at limiting the spread of the virus, such as coughing hygiene, limitations on social gatherings and school closures, and more research was needed on the benefits and drawbacks of such interventions.

She supported WHO's efforts to make vaccines available throughout the world through the transfer of technology. The implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) was essential for influenza pandemic preparedness and the control of infectious diseases in general. She urged the Secretariat to develop practical tools to assist Member States in implementing the Regulations, such as information on minimum standards for sanitary inspections, capacity

requirements at a country's points of entry and international contact tracing, in order to avoid major differences in facilities, arrangements or expectations among Member States.

Dr EL SAYED (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, emphasized that capacity building would be needed in order to ensure application of the International Health Regulations (2005) in the Region. Technical support must be provided in order to strengthen epidemiological surveillance and response systems, and strengthen national public health laboratories and influenza centres; to ensure prompt and reliable diagnosis of a public health emergency of international concern; to build capacity at designated points of entry; and to assure the necessary supplies, equipment, logistics and communication tools.

The expected human influenza pandemic required collaboration between all countries and international organizations. The countries of the Region had demonstrated clear political commitment and increased national levels of preparedness. However, they still lacked adequate epidemiological and laboratory capacities.

Isolates of influenza viruses should always be shared, for the purposes of vaccine production; otherwise global security would be threatened. Sharing was even more important in the case of newly emerging strains of the H5N1 virus than with seasonal influenza viruses, for which there were well-established procedures. However, the Secretariat and laboratories receiving isolates should guarantee that vaccines would be made available unconditionally to countries in need and at affordable cost. Support, including technology transfer, should be provided in order to boost national capacities for vaccine production.

Dr NGUYEN HOANG LONG (Viet Nam) said that his country, as one of those worst affected by avian influenza, had taken active measures, with support from WHO and the international community, and had succeeded in controlling and containing the disease. Communication and cooperation between countries was critical in dealing with public health emergencies.

He emphasized transparent sharing of information, virus samples and other specimens. However, countries had to receive proper and timely information on the use of the samples they provided, and the benefits of research had to be shared by all. In particular Viet Nam and other low-income countries should have equitable access to vaccines. WHO should continue providing assistance to support increased vaccine-production capacity of low-income countries. He supported the establishment of a drafting group.

Professor MWAKYUSA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his country shared the global concern that avian influenza had moved from Asia to Europe and Africa. Although no case had so far been recorded in his country, the movement of poultry and poultry products, people or their belongings from infected countries, and migrating wild birds carried the risk of disease. His Government had taken note of the various measures for control of avian influenza proposed at several meetings and conferences. It had developed a national avian influenza emergency preparedness plan and established a disease surveillance and response system. Diseases with epidemic potential or unusual events were reported immediately.

Six high-risk areas for the possible introduction of avian influenza through wild bird migration had been identified. Infrastructure for building rapid response systems and laboratory and surveillance capabilities were all weak. Attention was being focused on building laboratory capacity and infrastructure for virological and epidemiological surveillance, including sentinel laboratory-based surveillance.

The disease was of global concern, necessitating partnerships and shared information and resources, both financial and technical. He supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R7.

Mr LOBATO (Timor-Leste) said that no case of avian influenza in either poultry or humans had been reported in his country. Beginning in 2004, the ministries of health and agriculture, with technical support from WHO and FAO, had created a national plan and task force for emergency

preparedness and response. The Ministry of Health had already provided WHO collaborating centres with biological materials for research, sending human and animal samples to laboratories in neighbouring and other countries.

The draft resolution on responsible practices for sharing avian influenza viruses and resulting benefits would enable the existing framework and mechanisms to be revised for appropriate virus-sharing practices, and strengthen pandemic preparedness. Global partnerships should be established in order to enhance information sharing, capacity building and technology sharing and to ensure support to any country in the event of an avian influenza pandemic.

Mr JACKLICK (Marshall Islands) fully supported implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) at both regional and global levels. Once finalized, his country's pandemic influenza plan could be shared with other countries. No case of avian influenza had yet been reported in the country, but it faced significant problems with noncommunicable diseases such as type 2 diabetes mellitus and obesity.

Mr HERBERT (Saint Kitts and Nevis), expressing support for the draft resolution introduced by Indonesia, highlighted key areas for action, including his country's capacity to detect, analyse and respond to an emerging threat; the universal availability and subsequent procurement of vaccines, antiviral medicines and personal protective equipment; and, in the event of a pandemic, keeping his country's economy afloat in the face of an expected rapid decline in travel and tourism. He welcomed the availability of an outbreak response team for the Caribbean under the auspices of PAHO.

Through its focal point for the International Health Regulations (2005), Saint Kitts and Nevis would promptly integrate PAHO's technical expertise into its national response strategy, in conformity with the agreed protocol, and would work with PAHO in order to strengthen surveillance and port health systems.

Vaccine production should continue expanding as scarce supply would place nations without manufacturing capacity at greater risk of exclusion. All countries should share the benefits of a globalized response to the threat of an avian influenza pandemic.

Professor IANCU (Romania) said that implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) would be crucial in preventing, controlling and responding to the spread of diseases, including pandemic influenza. That risk obliged all countries to establish high-quality surveillance of influenza viruses. Romania had useful experience of influenza surveillance in humans, and therefore participated in the European Influenza Surveillance Scheme. Controlling the spread of avian strains of the disease in poultry in October to December 2005 and April to June 2006 had demonstrated her country's capacity to limit the spread of avian strains to humans. The support of experts from WHO and Member States of the European Union had been much appreciated. Romania was fully prepared for implementation of the Regulations and hoped for fruitful intercountry collaboration in the sharing of samples and genetic sequence data of seasonal influenza viruses in order to support the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network.

Dr CARBALLO QUESADA (Costa Rica) said that Costa Rica had drawn up a national avian influenza preparedness plan, which was available on the Ministry of Health's web site. A national influenza centre had been established and formed part of the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network, and four surveillance centres were located around the country. She supported the call in document A60/7 for more rapid routine sharing of H5N1 viruses and improved access to pandemic vaccines.

Costa Rica had established a contact centre and focal point for the International Health Regulations (2005), and would respond to WHO's request to verify information on health risks; the public health system had been reviewed; and a plan had been drawn up to improve the country's response capacity. Costa Rica supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R7.

Dr KAMWI (Namibia) said that the African Region had a responsibility to take preparedness measures and protect public health. In collaboration with development partners such as WHO, Namibia was finalizing a comprehensive plan for the control of avian and pandemic influenza. Efforts were also being made to strengthen surveillance. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr MELNIKOVA (Russian Federation), supporting WHO's activities to consolidate efforts to fight pandemic influenza, underlined the significance of the current practice of sharing clinical samples and viruses through the Global Influenza Surveillance Network, which was effective in evaluating the risk of a pandemic and in planning to reduce the threat. All States could contribute to the Network by sharing viruses and genetic sequence data, but she disapproved of imposing new conditions for their exchanging. Cooperation was needed to ensure that all States, including those without the necessary vaccine-production capacity, had access to diagnostic tools and effective vaccines, and WHO should develop mechanisms for that purpose. She urged all Member States to improve their national public health systems and to extend international cooperation in order to combat influenza.

The Russian Federation had experienced outbreaks of avian influenza over the past three years and was willing to share its experience in preventing the spread of the disease. It was extending international cooperation and a WHO Collaborating Centre had been established in Novosibirsk for researching diagnostics and studying influenza viruses for countries in eastern Europe and central Asia. That initiative had received support from the G8 countries (St Petersburg, July 2006), at which fighting infectious diseases had been a key topic. The Government had already earmarked resources to equip the Centre.

The country's bilateral agreements with Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan included material and technical support for virology laboratories. Her Government was prepared, if necessary, to increase its production of seasonal vaccines for use by other countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

She supported the recommendations on best practices for sharing influenza viruses and sequence data in accordance with current national legislation. She welcomed the application of the International Health Regulations (2005), an important instrument for exchanging epidemiological information, responding promptly to a threat and cooperating to prevent a pandemic.

Dr KAZIHISE (Burundi) said that, although unaffected so far by avian influenza, Burundi was conscious of the threat and had developed a preparedness plan, including a surveillance system for rapid response. The cost of pandemic-influenza vaccines should be reduced to a level that was affordable to countries unable to manufacture them.

Mr CÓRDOVA VILLALOBOS (Mexico) said that his country too had developed a national preparedness and response plan. He offered to share its experience. The seasonal influenza vaccine was administered to children under three years of age, adults aged over 50 and other people at high risk, and a strategic stockpile of personal protection equipment and medicines had been created. Financial support from WHO, amounting to about US\$ 2 million, would enable Mexico to manufacture an influenza vaccine.

Mexico would be applying the International Health Regulations (2005) from 15 June 2007. A national liaison centre would coordinate the work of the two national bodies responsible for protection against health risks and for epidemiological surveillance. A national trial in October 2006 had tested pandemic preparedness and response. He supported the proposal to set up a drafting group.

Dr BIN ABDUL RAHMAN (Malaysia) said that Malaysia was working towards compliance with the provisions of the International Health Regulations (2005), and had established national IHR focal points and surveillance and response mechanisms. Its influenza pandemic preparedness plan was being continuously updated. Simulation exercises were being regularly conducted at local and national levels. Malaysia had experienced some avian influenza outbreaks among poultry, but no human case had yet been detected. He supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R7. He

stressed transparent, fair and equitable international mechanisms in order to ensure that affordable vaccines should be available to those in need.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that priority should be given to research on the efficacy of antiviral medicines and pandemic influenza vaccines. WHO should promote domestic manufacturing capacity for influenza vaccine in developing countries, and sponsor the development of national veterinary and public health surveillance systems. The Organization must also provide support for intergovernmental cooperation.

Dr HAO Yang (China) said that China would continue to support global surveillance of avian and human influenza viruses and the sharing by Member States of related information and virus strains. WHO should encourage enterprises to provide financial and technical support to developing countries in order to help to strengthen their human resources and response capacity. He welcomed the efforts of WHO's regional offices in establishing stockpiles of medicines and vaccines and in developing a detailed operational protocol.

Sir Peter BARTER (Papua New Guinea) commended the reports. His country was vulnerable to the spread of avian influenza from neighbouring countries, but lacked the capacity to undertake surveillance and respond effectively to an influenza pandemic. He thanked WHO and other partners for technical and financial support, but his country was still far from being able to implement fully the requirements of the International Health Regulations (2005). Developing countries such as Papua New Guinea needed support for influenza surveillance, pandemic preparedness and response, strengthening capacity for national influenza centres, and full implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005). The draft resolution on mechanisms to promote access to influenza pandemic vaccine for developing countries lacking sufficient influenza vaccine production emphasized instead the identification of, and access to, potential vaccine viruses, vaccine production and stockpiling. He requested that the elements of the draft resolution dealing with support for routine influenza surveillance and pandemic preparedness be incorporated into the text of the draft resolution recommended in resolution EB120.R7. He also proposed inserting the words "and regional" after "global", and the words "and response" after "preparedness" in that draft resolution.

He found it difficult to support the draft resolution on responsible practices for sharing avian influenza viruses and resulting benefits. The language was too confusing in the context of a global health issue that required the attention and cooperation of all nations.

Dr NISHIYAMA (Japan) expressed appreciation of Indonesia's practice of sharing samples of influenza viruses through the WHO collaborating centre network. He emphasized the global benefits of provision of samples from affected countries and the immediate sharing of viruses by all countries, including the affected ones. The National Institute of Infectious Diseases of Japan, being a designated WHO Collaborating Centre, would share the samples and other information on the virus obtained from Indonesia, without specific material-transfer agreements in accordance with WHO's existing policy.

A multilateral mechanism, initiated by WHO, would be important for the impartial and transparent distribution of affordable vaccines to those in need. Partnerships with the vaccine industry should be strengthened.

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) said that the effectiveness of vaccination in controlling infectious diseases, particularly in a pandemic, was well known, but there was a need to improve health services and access to them, especially in primary health care. The ethical issues likely to arise during national and international responses to an influenza pandemic should be explored, as well as the role of the mass media in a pandemic.

Mr MASUKU (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that FAO continued to prioritize efforts to control and prevent avian and pandemic influenza. The intercontinental spread in early 2006 subtype of the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus had

resulted in infections with the H5N1 in many countries for the first time. However, the countries worst affected during the first three years of epizootic waves, including China, Thailand and Viet Nam, had managed to control the situation. The global situation had improved, and most newly infected or reinfected countries had improved their ability to detect, report and respond to outbreaks and to revert to a disease-free status.

The virus continued to circulate in some regions. The current shift to recurrent flare-up or persistence of the disease had an impact on the strategy to control highly pathogenic H5N1 virus infection in poultry. The continued application of culling measures in countries where the disease had not been stamped out had become increasingly unsustainable, and enzootic countries were increasingly relying on vaccination. FAO and OIE supported vaccination in such circumstances, provided that it met internationally accepted standards and followed implementation guidelines. Despite the usefulness of vaccination, there was a risk of continued virus evolution in areas of H5N1 persistence. Control strategies should be considered in combination with the various agro-ecological, socioeconomic, institutional and policy aspects. A global approach was essential, as was the sharing of influenza viruses and sequence data across geographical and political boundaries.

FAO had established support teams in the worst affected countries, and multidisciplinary avian influenza teams at regional level in Africa and Asia. Generous donor support had enabled a crisis management centre to be set up at FAO headquarters. In the field, it was stepping up joint efforts with OIE and the Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources. With OIE, FAO operated a global framework for the control of transboundary animal diseases in order to support and enhance veterinary services, epidemiological surveillance, laboratory networks and disease early-warning and response mechanisms. Collaboration with WHO was also being stepped up, especially with regard to zoonotic diseases, including the shift of emerging pathogens from animals to humans, and foodborne illnesses. FAO, OIE and WHO had launched a Global Early Warning and Response System to improve international vigilance and enhance the ability to respond to international animal disease outbreaks that posed a threat to public health. Given that the emergence of highly pathogenic avian influenza resulted from human activity, the solution should be a matter of human choice and priority setting.

Dr NABARRO (United Nations System Senior Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza) warned of a potential major humanitarian crisis. Recent outbreaks of infectious diseases and previous pandemics had had a significant impact on social, economic and governance systems, a fact recognized in the International Health Regulations (2005). In their preparedness strategies, countries were therefore looking increasingly to the impact of a pandemic beyond the health sector. Various United Nations humanitarian agencies were working with ILO, FAO, WHO, UNICEF, the International Civil Aviation Organization, WFP and the United Nations World Tourism Organization to support national strategies, including sustaining essential services and governance in the event of a pandemic. They were also linking up with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and were promoting a strong intergovernmental effort in order to mitigate the impact of the next influenza pandemic. Action through the United Nations system was coordinated by his office and he would continue to engage with national authorities, in conjunction with WHO and other specialized agencies, in order to prepare for the non-health aspects of an influenza pandemic.

Dr RYS (European Commission) said that pandemic influenza was high on the Commission's agenda. Progress towards preparedness was good, but it would require a further two to three years to reach a satisfactory level. The Commission was working closely with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, which had recently reported on the state of preparedness in Member States. Only through international partnership could health threats on the scale of pandemic influenza be properly tackled. Together with the Centre and the Regional Office for Europe, the Commission had organized joint workshops in order to exchange best practices between the Regional Office and Member States.

The Commission supported global efforts to control avian influenza and prevent pandemic influenza, and the provision of technical and financial assistance from the international community to

developing countries affected by avian influenza. He welcomed the International Health Regulations (2005) and looked forward to their entry into force.

Dr DUPLESSIS (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, observed that the magnitude of a human influenza pandemic would require the involvement of governments, in partnership with Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies, civil society and the private sector. Enhanced capacity at the local level and additional resources were urgently needed, but much promised assistance had yet to be delivered.

The International Federation worked towards the prevention and containment of avian influenza outbreaks and pandemic preparedness through its network of members, many of which had substantial experience in emergencies. Trained volunteers delivered preventive treatment everywhere because of their close involvement with local communities. Avian influenza interventions were in progress in more than 20 countries in Africa, Asia and Europe. National societies could play a key role in a phase 4 or 5 alert or a pandemic.

The International Federation had already formed a working partnership with several humanitarian organizations. It also worked closely with the United Nations System Influenza Coordination Office, whose excellent work he commended. The willingness of WHO to promote partnerships through its contacts with ministries of health was particularly welcome. The work with governments would be taken further at the 30th International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference (Geneva, 20–22 November 2007). Avian influenza must remain a top priority, and not be allowed to fade merely because media warnings had yet to come true. Current work on avian and human influenza also provided invaluable experience in preparing for other global threats.

Dr HEYMANN (Assistant Director-General) acknowledged the needs of many Member States to strengthen capacity in their health sectors to deal with a pandemic, and the offers from other Member States to provide support. Guidance issued by WHO in 2005 on the timely sharing of influenza viruses had remained on the WHO web site until after the meeting of the Influenza Pandemic Task Force in September 2006. As part of the process of early implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) in relation to avian influenza, during the first meeting of the Task Force on Pandemic Influenza, seven best practices had been devised to reflect the fact that under the revised Regulations virus sharing would be carried out in a different environment and the best practices replaced the guidance from 2005.

(For approval of a draft resolution, see summary record of the thirteenth meeting.)

Smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks: Item 12.2 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.8, A60/9 and A60/40)

Ms BU FIGUEROA (Honduras), invited by the CHAIRMAN to introduce the item as Rapporteur, said that the Board, at its 120th session, had considered previous Health Assembly resolutions on the destruction of variola virus stocks, and the report of the eighth meeting of the WHO Advisory Committee on Variola Virus Research on the progress made in research and in the development of antiviral agents, improved vaccines, safer diagnostic assays and genomic sequencing.¹ The Board had agreed on the destruction of live variola virus stocks, but not on when to review the research programme so that a firm date could be set for their destruction.

Dr AMMAR (Lebanon), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, commented that the destruction of variola virus stocks had been postponed since 1999 for the sake of public health research. The research agenda had been broad, and many of the studies were of

¹ Document EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/2, summary record of the second meeting, section 3.

limited public health importance. At its seventh meeting in November 2005, the WHO Advisory Committee on Variola Virus Research had reviewed the progress made in live variola virus research, and had concluded that live virus was no longer needed for work on sequencing, diagnostics and vaccines. WHO should comprehensively assess achievements and set a time limit for the ongoing research and a date for destroying the existing stocks. Developing countries should be empowered to ensure early detection and response of any disease event, as part of global health security. He emphasized WHO's responsibility to ensure that its resolutions were implemented.

Mr MSELEKU (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, recalled that the World Health Assembly had adopted in resolution WHA33.3 a declaration on the global eradication of smallpox. Subsequent Health Assemblies had decided on the temporary retention of variola virus stocks and their eventual destruction. The draft resolution should allow the current Health Assembly to reach consensus. He noted the commitment to a major review of past, present and planned research; annual assessments of the need for further retention of the existing stocks of variola virus; inspections of the two authorized repositories in order to ensure that the laboratories met the requirements for biosafety and biosecurity; and annual submission of detailed reports to the Health Assembly. He also noted the request to the Director-General to review the membership of the WHO Advisory Committee and the participation of advisers and observers in the Committee's meetings so as to ensure balanced geographical representation and the independence of its members.

In view of the significant progress made in meeting the commitments set out in the draft resolution, the African group could agree that 2010 should be the year for completing the review. That would allow consensus to be reached at the Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly on the timing of destruction of existing variola virus stocks. The review should be wide-ranging. Assurances should be obtained that no stocks would be retained without the Organization's knowledge.

Dr WANNA HANSHAOWORAKUL (Thailand) said that variola virus stocks should be destroyed as soon as possible. She was aware that live virus would be needed to ensure efficacy testing in vitro and that no antiviral agents for smallpox had yet been licensed. However, ongoing research should be assessed in terms of its chances of success, and closely monitored according to the planned time frame. Research results should be disseminated publicly in order to permit discussion on the need for further studies.

Reports on the process and outcomes of the safety and security inspections of authorized repositories should be made publicly available. According to the Advisory Committee's report on its eighth meeting, all research projects had been authorized up to the end of 2007, after which they would be re-evaluated. Since it might take a further year for them to be concluded and their findings documented, the major review should be planned to start by 2008.

In paragraph 4(1) of the draft resolution submitted in resolution EB120.R8, the date of the major review should be 2009, and the deadline for the Health Assembly to reach consensus should be the sixty-third session. A new sentence should be inserted at the end of paragraph 4(5), to read: "the inspection mission report should be available on the web for public information".

Mr SCHOLTEN (Germany) spoke on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. The candidate countries Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova aligned themselves with his statement. He acknowledged the remarkable progress in research on new diagnostic tools and treatment of orthopoxvirus infections. He welcomed efforts to increase the probability of the destruction of virus stocks at a precise date in the future, and supported the draft resolution submitted in resolution EB120.R8. Pending the development of alternative research methods, the retention of virus stocks remained necessary, but all approved research should continue to be outcome-oriented, time-limited and transparent. For the time being, further temporary retention of existing stocks at the two repositories should be authorized in order to permit further international research, and a new date

for destruction should be set only when research accomplishments and outcomes allowed a consensus to be reached on the timing and process of such destruction. There should be a major review of research in 2010, so that the Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly could reach such a consensus.

Ms IMAI (Japan) reaffirmed the principle that smallpox eradication called for the destruction of live variola virus stocks in the laboratory. However, given the continuing threat of bioterrorism, current research must contribute to public health goals. Thus, she appreciated the Advisory Committee's continuing review of progress on outcome-oriented, time-limited research.

Recent technological developments enhanced the value of current research. However, generation gaps might mean that some scientists were unfamiliar with the WHO smallpox eradication programme. Research institutes or laboratories should be made aware of WHO policy on the regulation of recombinant DNA experiments related to variola virus fragments.

Consensus on the timing of the destruction of virus stocks might be difficult to reach, especially since a lack of information made it difficult to confirm a research period, but ought to be achieved.

Mr A.P. SINGH (India) welcomed the finding that virus strains in the two authorized repositories were being maintained with appropriate safeguards. However, the continued retention of the variola virus without a definite date for its total destruction was a matter of concern.

India was keenly interested in developing the operational framework for the WHO smallpox vaccine reserve in such a way that it would be able to obtain timely, adequate supplies of the vaccine if necessary. The framework must be developed on the basis of balanced geographical representation and adequate representation of those Member States considered to be most vulnerable to an unforeseen natural occurrence or accidental or deliberate release of any smallpox viruses. The other suggestions contained in the draft resolution deserved support.

Dr OLIVEROS (Philippines) said that the ultimate goal was the destruction of all remaining stocks of variola virus, but the final decision must be taken carefully. The decision on the date for the destruction of virus stocks and the conclusion of ongoing research should be taken in 2010, and not postponed further. Smallpox had been eradicated totally in 1980, so there had already been ample time for research and experiments to be conducted. With the emergence of DNA characterization and genetic materials for vaccine development there was no longer any need for stocks to be retained. There was, moreover, a great threat to biosafety in the event of release into the environment. As biotechnology advanced, there would be more disease agents and new pathogenic organisms could be created.

She strongly supported proposals for more balanced representation in the Advisory Committee and for progress reports on the phasing of the ultimate destruction of smallpox virus.

Mr SAADAT (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, in the years since the Health Assembly had decided on the destruction of remaining virus stocks, temporary retention of stocks for research purposes had become the rule, because a handful of countries had dragged the issue out. Instead of exerting its authority to ensure adherence to a destruction date, the Health Assembly had allowed the Advisory Committee to authorize an expanded, diversified and seemingly endless research agenda, which was being used to justify the retention of stocks for years to come. However, independent experts had confirmed that all essential research requiring live stocks was complete and that there was a supply of vaccines and diagnostic tools. The Health Assembly should instruct the Advisory Committee to draft a stocktaking report; fix a new destruction date; prohibit all genetic engineering of virus stocks; determine whether the Advisory Committee had fulfilled its mandate; and develop an outcome-oriented, time-bound and regulated research agenda for the period remaining before destruction. The Advisory Committee's composition and working methods had to be reformed. Live virus stocks should be considered a global public good under global jurisdiction. The two existing repositories should be deemed global facilities, with all Member States sharing responsibilities and with global ownership of the research achievements.

The primacy of public health should be upheld in all circumstances: WHO should not be dragged into issues that were beyond its competence or mandate, or be held hostage to interests that were not health related. The availability of viral stocks in biological weapon form was frightening. Because virus stocks could be misused or accidentally released, the reluctance to destroy them made the world less secure. Eradication was an absolute term and covered not just smallpox itself, but also its causal agents. He expressed support for the statement made on behalf of the Member States of the African Region.

Dr STEIGER (United States of America) strongly supported the continuation of essential research using the live smallpox virus stocks held at the two official repositories. At the same time, his Government remained committed to the full implementation of resolution WHA55.15. Eminent international scientists had yet to exhaust the research potential of the live virus and ongoing research was focusing on the development of better diagnostic tools, new antiviral agents and improved vaccines. Recent research also suggested that existing vaccines might be losing their potency. He welcomed the convening of a special panel of African and other scientists in August 2006 in order to review the current status of research. The panel had underscored the continuing need for research of benefit to all, especially those with compromised immune systems.

The Secretariat and the Member States had participated in the various open-ended working groups on the issue over the past year, and he especially appreciated the contributions by African Member States. He supported the draft resolution, which provided for a major review in 2010. The operational framework for the WHO vaccine reserve needed to be completed, and he urged the Secretariat to do so, with input from Member States. With regard to the amendment proposed by the delegate of Thailand to paragraph 4(5) of the resolution submitted in resolution EB120.R8, the report of the inspection team that had visited the repositories in the United States and the Russian Federation contained information that must not fall into the wrong hands. He therefore suggested that the amendment should read as follows: "The inspection mission report should be available on the web for public information, after appropriate redaction".

Mr PIRIMKULOV (Uzbekistan) supported the position of the Russian Federation that artificial deadlines should not be set for the destruction of virus stocks. A decision was premature until research was complete.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that establishing a clear objective in order to set a deadline for the research process was essential, so that the destruction of virus stocks could be carried out as soon as possible.

The meeting rose at 17:30.

THIRD MEETING

Wednesday, 16 May 2007, at 09.30

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)
later: Dr A. BALBISI (Jordan)

TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks: Item 12.2 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R8, A60/9 and A60/40) (continued)

Dr AL-SALEH (Kuwait) said that the smallpox threat in Kuwait during the Gulf War had seriously concerned his country and its neighbours. In view of the risk inherent in live viruses, the possibility of bioterrorism and the improved treatment of smallpox, the variola virus stocks should be destroyed by 2010. He fully supported the proposal to that effect.

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) fully agreed that the remaining stocks of the live variola virus should be destroyed. A date for destruction should be established only when the stocks were no longer required for public health research. The major review referred to in paragraph 4(1) of the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R8 must be definitive, comprehensive and scientific. Member States must have enough time to consider it carefully before the Health Assembly. He therefore endorsed the view expressed by the delegates of Germany and the United States of America that the major review should take place in 2010. The Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly would reach a consensus on the timing of the destruction.

He agreed with the delegate of Thailand that some form of inspection report should be made available to Member States.

Dr HAO Yang (China) observed that progress had been made in some countries in the diagnosis of smallpox infection, in research and development and in the evaluation of new antiviral agents. WHO should define the programmes and objectives for future research. More stringent measures would ensure biosafety in laboratories. The Secretariat should report to Member States on research progress.

Dr TANGI (Tonga) endorsed the views expressed by the delegate of Canada. The lengthy discussions concerning the variola virus had hitherto focused on the stocks at the two official repositories. However, only when WHO was convinced that there were no unknown stocks of the virus should a time frame be developed for destroying stocks at the authorized repositories.

He requested clarification of the legal significance of the term “ownership” in paragraph 4(11) of the draft resolution. He agreed with the delegate of Thailand that information about the inspections referred to in paragraph 4(5) should be readily available to Member States.

Dr FEDOROV (Russian Federation) said that, given the continued threat of smallpox, the Russian Federation intended to pursue research on variola virus, in accordance with resolutions WHA52.10 and WHA55.15. Despite progress in studying research on the virus, new vaccines, antiviral agents and diagnostics, there were still no licensed, effective and safe means of prevention or treatment.

The possible use of variola virus for terrorist purposes could be catastrophic, especially given that most of the world's population lacked immunity to it. In addition to the stocks held at the two official repositories, there might be stocks not accounted for that could fall into the wrong hands. The destruction of the official stocks could give a signal to bioterrorist groups to scale up their work. Genetic engineering of the virus could render all the tools hitherto developed to deal with smallpox ineffective and even harmful. Retaining the official stocks in the Russian Federation and the United States, and maintaining a laboratory infrastructure with the highest levels of biosafety and highly trained staff, were key factors in preventing the use of the virus for terrorist purposes.

Had enough thought had been given to the possible re-emergence of the smallpox virus from a natural source? The outbreak of monkeypox in 1996–1997 had shown an emerging infection with real potential to spread among the human population. Destruction of the official stocks of the smallpox virus would inevitably lower vigilance with regard to smallpox, and result in the gradual decline and eventual disappearance of the specialist skills – a highly irresponsible loss. Following the global eradication of smallpox, scientific research into the virus, new vaccines and antiviral agents had been curtailed or stopped, and doctors had almost lost diagnostic and treatment skills. If the agent were no longer present, it would be impossible to maintain expensive laboratory capacity and continue to train and develop highly qualified staff. Where would the rapid-reaction health personnel come from in the event of a bioterrorist attack, or a natural recurrence or emergence of disease from an evolved orthopox virus? How would samples be collected and transported, where would suspect samples be taken, who would diagnose them, and who would take the necessary steps to localize any outbreak? These were unanswered questions.

The scientific centres in the Russian Federation and the United States worked under the auspices of the WHO Secretariat and in accordance with the instructions of the Health Assembly. The WHO Advisory Committee on Variola Virus Research reviewed the results of the work undertaken every year and made necessary adjustments. It was imperative that research should be continued on more effective and safer vaccines, better diagnostics, antiviral agents, the virus genome and pathogenesis of the infection. The question of lifting the moratorium on the destruction of the existing authorized stocks of the variola virus should be addressed only when safe and effective vaccines were accessible to the international community, proven antiviral agents with different methods of action had been developed, and diagnostics specific to type and strain were available. That could take 10 years or more.

Dr PARIRENYATWA (Zimbabwe) said that there was consensus on the need to destroy all the known remaining stocks of variola virus: at issue was the timing. The major research review should be submitted in 2010. A date should then be set for the final destruction of the stocks.

Dr OGWELL (Kenya) emphasized that resolution WHA55.15 had authorized the further retention of existing stocks of variola virus on a temporary basis only. Because of the threat of bioterrorism, retention did not make the world a safer place, and could encourage others to acquire similar viruses. The focus should be on the public health consequences of the virus being released. The review should be conducted in 2010, and the Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly should set a date for destruction.

Professor HORVATH (Australia) said that Australia supported retention of limited, monitored and controlled stocks of variola virus, for essential research only. The virus stocks would be important for any rapid response and research in the event of natural re-emergence or intentional release of smallpox or a smallpox-like virus. There might also be a future research need for variola virus stock.

All proposals for research using variola virus stocks should be reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Variola Virus Research, in order to ascertain whether the research was essential and whether all biosafety and biosecurity requirements were met. The major review referred to in paragraph 4(1) of the draft resolution should take place in 2010.

Dr ST. JOHN (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Caribbean Community, supported the draft resolution. The major review should be carried out in 2010. She had confidence in the Advisory Committee on Variola Virus Research, and noted that all the stocks were safe and accounted for. Progress in research, declining needs for variola virus, and safety and security were all matters to be kept under review before a firm date was set for destroying the stocks.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) said that, although there had been a mention of 2009 as the date for a major review, countries appeared to favour specifying the Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly in paragraphs 3 and 4(1) of the draft resolution, and the date 2010 in paragraph 4(1). An amendment proposed by the delegate of Thailand to paragraph 4(5), subsequently amended by the delegate of the United States, would result in the inclusion at the end of paragraph 4(5) of the words “the inspection mission reports should be available for public information after appropriate redaction”.

Dr WANNA HANSHAOWORAKUL (Thailand) said that she could accept either 2009 or 2010 as the date for the review. As for the proposed amendment to paragraph 4(5), the inspection reports should be based on scientific considerations and should be free of any trace of political influence. They should therefore be available without redaction.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) said that the full reports might contain information, for example relating to access to sites where variola virus stocks were held, that should not be made freely available for reasons of safety and security.

Dr WANNA HANSHAOWORAKUL (Thailand) suggested amending the text to “after appropriate scientific consideration”.

After clarification, the draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Dr Balbisi took the Chair.

Control of leishmaniasis: Item 12.3 of the Agenda (Documents EBSS–EB118/2006/REC/1, resolution EB118.R3, and A60/10)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolution contained in resolution EB118.R3.

Professor FAIZ (Bangladesh) said that Bangladesh’s early success in controlling visceral leishmaniasis, which was endemic with around 40 000 cases per year, had been a collateral benefit of indoor residual spraying with DDT to control malaria. Bangladesh had signed a memorandum of understanding with India and Nepal in 2005 to eliminate visceral leishmaniasis by 2015, elimination being defined as fewer than one case for every 10 000 people. In Bangladesh control measures included indoor residual spraying with deltamethrin, early diagnosis using the recombinant k39 dipstick test, and oral treatment with miltefosine, dispensed at hospitals on an outpatient basis. A phase IV trial was being conducted in 11 sub-district hospitals, involving more than 300 patients, and it was hoped that compliance could be improved by administering a combination treatment: a short course of amphotericin B and a 14-day oral course of miltefosine. Further research was needed on different treatment regimens. Key strategies for elimination would include early diagnosis, prompt treatment, entomological and epidemiological surveillance, indoor residual insecticide spraying, and information, education and communication activities. Elimination of visceral leishmaniasis should boost efforts to alleviate poverty. Consideration was being given to setting up a regional registry for

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s first report and adopted as resolution WHA60.R1.

cases of visceral leishmaniasis in pregnancy. Bangladesh was requesting financial support for its leishmaniasis control activities, and he hoped that WHO would negotiate with industry for a reduction in the price of miltefosine.

Dr MESSELE (Ethiopia), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, said that visceral and cutaneous leishmaniasis caused considerable morbidity and mortality in Africa; several countries had experienced epidemics. The disease burden was not well defined, owing to the lack of surveillance systems, nor was the disease well recognized by the general public or most health workers. Coinfection with visceral leishmaniasis and HIV was compounding the problem. Treatment was expensive, and had side effects. The African group welcomed the efforts being made by WHO to control the disease. WHO should also facilitate research into safer, effective and cheaper medicines, operational research, and cross-border collaboration on leishmaniasis control. He supported the draft resolution.

Mr CHAOUKI (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the 22 Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that leishmaniasis was endemic in many countries in the Region, and periodic epidemics were common. Buildings and infrastructure destroyed by conflict or natural disaster provided breeding sites for the sandfly vector, leading to the rapid spread of the disease. Refugee movements also contributed to the spread. Two cutaneous and two visceral forms of leishmaniasis were found in the Region. Outbreaks of zoonotic cutaneous leishmaniasis caused by *Leishmania major* occurred in desert regions after rainy years or following water-development projects, owing to population increases in rodents forming the wild reservoir. Many countries in the Region were affected, experiencing some 50 000 cases per year. Zoonotic cutaneous leishmaniasis could be controlled by ecological modifications to reduce the rodent reservoir. Paragraph 2(2)(a) of the draft resolution should therefore be amended by inserting “and reservoir” after “vector”. There had been significant outbreaks of anthroponotic cutaneous leishmaniasis in recent years, for example in Afghanistan in 2003, mainly as a result of the displacement of non-immune populations to endemic areas. Vector control through residual insecticide spraying, although effective, was neither practical nor affordable. However, insecticide-treated bednets could make a useful contribution. Infantile visceral leishmaniasis occurred sporadically in the Region. Outbreaks of anthroponotic visceral leishmaniasis occurred mainly in Sudan, but had declined in recent years as a result of a reduction in population movements and better diagnostic and therapeutic coverage.

The substantial price reduction negotiated recently by WHO for meglumine antimonate for the public sector in developing countries should provide a major breakthrough in scaling up treatment. Thanks were due to all parties concerned. He supported the draft resolution with the proposed amendments.

Speaking as the delegate of Morocco, he said that the country was endemic for the cutaneous and visceral forms of leishmaniasis. The control programme was based on vector control, case detection and treatment, raising awareness among the population, and strong intersectoral collaboration. It was necessary to strengthen local capacity to control the disease, to develop effective low-cost medication and to encourage the use of insecticide-impregnated bednets.

Dr ZARAMBA (Uganda) welcomed the focus on neglected tropical diseases and their control. Mucocutaneous and visceral leishmaniasis were endemic in the north-east of Uganda. Control activities were hampered by shortcomings in the health system and the high cost of miltefosine and amphotericin B. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that leishmaniasis remained one of the most neglected of the tropical diseases, with few tools for control and no criteria to govern control measures. Coinfection with visceral leishmaniasis and HIV was an ominous global trend, resulting in the spread of leishmaniasis beyond previously endemic areas. There was an urgent need for research, under the auspices of the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, on cheap effective medicines and rapid and reliable diagnostic tools.

Mapping the distribution of the disease and the populations at risk was another priority. Integrated vector management and control would strengthen a multipronged approach to interrupting the transmission of the disease. His country remained endemic for cutaneous leishmaniasis, and could share experience gained in prevention and control with other endemic countries. He supported the draft resolution.

Ms JOHRI (India) said that India had signed a memorandum of understanding with Bangladesh and Nepal, the other two countries in the South-East Asia Region endemic for visceral leishmaniasis, on harmonizing prevention and control interventions and fixing 2015 as the target date for eliminating the disease in the Region. India was committed to elimination by 2010 and was providing funding to provincial governments for control measures through the primary health care system. She supported the draft resolution, but suggested the inclusion of references to surveillance of post-kala-azar dermal leishmaniasis, which remained a potential source for the transmission of *L. donovani*, and to the policy on treatment for coinfection with HIV and visceral leishmaniasis. Since leishmaniasis affected the most vulnerable population groups and could be eliminated rather than simply controlled, Member States should make that their goal.

Mr HAGE CARMO (Brazil) supported the draft resolution, but proposed adding three more subparagraphs to paragraph 1, to read: “(6) to promote the sustainability of surveillance actions and leishmaniasis control; (7) to support studies concerning the surveillance and control of leishmaniasis; (8) to share experiences in the development of studies and technologies applied to the prevention and control of leishmaniasis”.

Three subparagraphs should also be added to paragraph 4: “(8) to promote actions together with the main laboratories in order to reduce medicine costs to developing countries; (9) to foment and support studies on (a) the evaluation of the efficacy of new medicines, (b) the evaluation of dose and length of treatment for existing medicines, and (c) standardization of reagents for diagnosis of the disease, with emphasis on visceral leishmaniasis; (10) to implement actions in order to improve coordination among leishmaniasis multilateral institutions and international donors.”

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that both visceral and cutaneous leishmaniasis were seasonal in Iraq, with transmission from May to October after the hatching of sandfly eggs, and a peak in new cases between December and February. Population movement was a main variable affecting incidence of the disease. WHO should support research into the effectiveness of insecticides for indoor and outdoor spraying, and help in evaluating the efficacy of fogging in reducing vector density; early case detection; procuring treatment and evaluating its effectiveness; regular and sustainable follow-up after treatment; institutional and individual capacity building in all aspects of leishmaniasis prevention and management; and the readoption of specific measures for prevention and control of the disease among internally displaced and immigrant populations.

Dr PHUSIT PRAKONGSAI (Thailand), referring to the memorandum of understanding signed by Bangladesh, India and Nepal, agreed that leishmaniasis placed a heavy socioeconomic burden on families, communities and health systems in affected countries. Reliable epidemiological data were vital in monitoring the disease and assessing its impact on populations and health systems. WHO should work to improve surveillance of leishmaniasis, the vector and wild reservoirs in endemic countries. Thailand was willing to share its experience from over two decades of combating communicable diseases in rural areas. Strong capacity, good primary and secondary health care infrastructures, and improvements in public knowledge and socioeconomic status were crucial to communicable disease control.

Paragraph 1(3) of the draft resolution should be amended by inserting the words “in providing primary and secondary care” after “centres”, and adding a new subparagraph to paragraph 1, to read: “(6) to improve knowledge about and skills to prevent leishmaniasis among people in the rural areas, including their socioeconomic status”. A new subparagraph should be added to paragraph 4, to read: “to promote and support the development of safe, effective and affordable vaccine, diagnostic tools

and medicines with less toxicity for leishmaniasis control". Paragraph 4(6) should be amended by adding "WHO regional offices and governments of the Member States affected by leishmaniasis".

Dr AL-SALEH (Kuwait) said that leishmaniasis remained a major threat worldwide, even in areas not at present affected, because of its wide variety of reservoirs and because the vector was strong enough to adapt to different environments. The draft resolution should therefore contain, in paragraph 1(5), a reference to collaboration between national and international parties or organizations. In the same subparagraph, the words "and the common threat of the disease" should be inserted after "common foci". The private sector should be involved in both national and international plans.

Dr AYDINLI (Turkey) called for a multidisciplinary approach, embracing all relevant institutions and organizations within a national control programme supported by policy-makers. Turkey had a comprehensive leishmaniasis control programme, and both forms of the disease were on its list of notifiable diseases. Cases had fallen from almost 5500 in 1994 to 1800 in 2006, with no fatalities. Medicines for treating patients were provided and administered free of charge by the Ministry of Health.

Dr NYIKAL (Kenya), welcoming WHO's work on leishmaniasis, said that the visceral form of the disease was a public health problem in Kenya. The main obstacles were the cost and complexity of the treatment, since available medicines were expensive and difficult to administer. He supported the draft resolution, in particular paragraph 2(2)(b).

Dr LEVENTHAL (Israel) drew attention to the need to identify good practices in cross-border leishmaniasis control projects. Such practices should be implemented on the eastern side of the Mediterranean.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) said that his Government provided significant support for research to combat and control leishmaniasis. A sustainable control strategy included better diagnostics and therapies; improved access to health care; and health-sector reform. Novel approaches might include therapeutic vaccines and prophylactic vaccination in order to control cutaneous and mucocutaneous leishmaniasis. Those treatments had proved effective in parts of South America and Africa. In treating visceral leishmaniasis, immune-based therapies could replace current medicines, which did not work well in HIV-coinfected patients. He congratulated WHO on raising global awareness of the need to control and eliminate leishmaniasis, and endorsed the draft resolution.

Mrs REITENBACH (Germany) asked whether there was any prospect of obtaining a substantial price reduction for liposomal amphotericin B, referred to in paragraph 9 of document A60/10. If so, how would that affect the recommendations in the draft resolution?

Mr MENESES (Mexico) drew attention to the difficulty of comparing data, on account of the variety of procedures and methods used by different countries for diagnosis and epidemiological surveillance. Member States should agree on standards for diagnosis, surveillance and control, treatment and access to medicines in order to make progress towards preventing and controlling visceral leishmaniasis, the form taken by the disease in his country. There was a lack of skilled human resources in the areas of epidemiological surveillance, health promotion, diagnosis and treatment; a shortage of diagnostic and entomological reference centres; and inadequate quality control and timely access to medicines in affected areas. Visceral leishmaniasis prevention required interdisciplinary groups, and health promotion programmes needed support from WHO. The activities of ministries dealing with public health and vector control were poorly coordinated. Countries in the Americas should strengthen their national leishmaniasis control programmes by making them part of their national and subregional agendas. Calling on the Health Assembly to make a commitment to

strengthening leishmaniasis prevention and control programmes, especially in the Americas, he endorsed the draft resolution.

Dr ALVAR (Innovative and Intensified Disease Management), replying to the question raised by the delegate of Germany, said that in March 2007 the company producing liposomal amphotericin B had announced a 90% reduction in the price. WHO would negotiate with other companies on price reductions for other medicines; a successful outcome would have a great impact on evidence-based policy for leishmaniasis control.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that a new version of the draft resolution, incorporating the amendments proposed, should be prepared for distribution.

It was so agreed.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see the summary record of the eighth meeting.)

Dr Jean Louis resumed the Chair.

Poliomyelitis: mechanism for management of potential risks to eradication: Item 12.4 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R1, and A60/11)

Mr SHIRALIYEV (representative of the Executive Board) said that the Board at its 120th session had focused on the need to intensify eradication efforts in four countries: Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and Pakistan.¹ Board members had also discussed the steps individual Member States could take in order to reduce the risk of reintroduction of polioviruses by travellers from poliomyelitis-infected areas. The Board had agreed on the advisability of full immunization against poliomyelitis for all travellers to and from areas in which poliovirus was circulating and that an appropriate standing recommendation to that effect should be considered under the provisions of the International Health Regulations (2005) upon their entry into force in mid-2007. Work was required in order to establish a mechanism for minimizing and managing the long-term risks of poliovirus reintroduction or re-emergence in the post-eradication era. The Board had adopted resolution EB120.R1, which recommend a resolution to the Health Assembly.

Ms JOHRI (India) said that her Government was fully committed to eradicating poliomyelitis within the country, and preventing its international spread. Poliomyelitis eradication was the largest single programme in India's health sector, and, although government investment had been rising, contributions from development partners were declining. Circulation of poliovirus had been contained within just two endemic states, and the genetic biodiversity of the viruses had been reduced. The outbreak in 2006 had been much less intense than that in 2002. Surveillance of acute flaccid paralysis in India was extremely sensitive. A mass immunization programme, conducted since 2003 with WHO and UNICEF, had achieved high levels of coverage. India was dealing with a growing number of susceptible people and foci of missed children in underserved pockets. Significant gains gave confidence for eradicating poliomyelitis in the near future.

She underlined the request to the Director-General, in paragraph 3(2) of the draft resolution, to assist in mobilizing financial resources. In view of the high level of commitment for poliomyelitis eradication, and limited technical, financial and management capacities of many Member States, she proposed several amendments. In paragraph 1, the phrase "in certain geographical areas," should be inserted after the word "prevalent,". Paragraph 2(1) should be amended to read "to review and if appropriate update national recommendations on immunization against poliomyelitis to reduce the risk

¹ Document EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/2, summary record of the second meeting, section 3.

of international spread". In paragraph 2(3) the word "importation" should be replaced by "international spread". Paragraph 3(4) should be replaced by "to continue to examine and to disseminate measures Member States can take to reduce the risk and consequences of international spread of polioviruses, including, if and when needed, the consideration of temporary or standing recommendations under the International Health Regulations (2005);".

Dr VÁSCONEZ (Ecuador) said that circulation of the wild poliovirus had been interrupted in Ecuador for 17 years. Vaccination coverage had been maintained at more than 94% in 90% of regions. For five years, vaccination of children under five had been stepped up in towns with a coverage of less than 80%. Epidemiological surveillance indicators were in line with international standards. Control of circulation of poliovirus in the post-eradication era was based on a policy of confinement of the virus in laboratories. For various social, demographic, economic, political and financial reasons, some countries had still not managed to stop circulation of the wild virus. Countries with effective strategies had brought about a significant reduction in the number of cases. She endorsed the draft resolution.

Dr SUGIURA (Japan) noted the successful action taken against outbreaks of wild poliovirus in Indonesia and Yemen in 2005. His country would provide support for the four countries where poliomyelitis was still endemic, particularly Nigeria. He welcomed the recommendation in the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R1 relating to the immunization of travellers from countries where wild poliovirus was circulating. He proposed the following addition to the preamble of that draft resolution: "Noting that the maintenance of routine immunization in polio-free countries contributes not only to reducing the risk of wild poliovirus outbreaks but also to minimizing the spread of vaccine-derived poliovirus outbreaks".

Dr OUAHDI (Algeria) suggested that the draft resolution should be amended in order to reflect the fact that poliomyelitis was also a waterborne disease, with the addition of appropriate references to environmental health and the treatment of drinking water.

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) said that the eradication of poliomyelitis was technically feasible but it would require considerable political commitment from endemic countries. Every country must set up active surveillance programmes with the immediate notification of all cases. In her country, immunization against poliomyelitis was provided free of charge for everyone. She supported the draft resolution, with the following amendment at the end of paragraph 2(3): "... supplementary poliomyelitis immunization activities by additional campaigns in close collaboration with the mass media and the public".

Dr WANNA HANSHAOWORAKUL (Thailand) said that the eradication of poliomyelitis involved four main activities: surveillance of acute flaccid paralysis, routine immunization, national and subnational immunization campaigns, and mopping-up activities following case detection. Those activities demanded enormous resources, which countries could not afford indefinitely. Cases caused by imported polioviruses were likely to occur. Low-income countries would need the technical and financial support of WHO and international donors, and a detailed procedure would be required for monitoring the effectiveness of immunization of travellers entering or leaving endemic areas.

She asked for the following information: of all annual cases of poliomyelitis in the world, what proportion was represented by imported cases? What were the cost implications of immunizing travellers entering or leaving endemic areas? Did the health systems of the four endemic countries have the necessary capacity to implement such a policy? She suggested that a sentence should be added at the end of paragraph 3(4) of the draft resolution, to read: "... areas where poliovirus is circulating. The financial implications, operational issues and lessons drawn from implementing this policy should be shared with the public."

Professor TLOU (Botswana) said that, when poliomyelitis had broken out in neighbouring Namibia in 2006, Botswana had avoided imported cases by means of heightened surveillance and

social mobilization in high-risk districts along the border between the two countries. She appreciated the cooperation of Namibia in the implementation of WHO travel advice and the sharing of information, as well as the technical assistance provided by WHO.

It was essential to minimize the risk of reintroducing wild polioviruses into poliomyelitis-free areas and prevent the re-emergence of the disease in the post-eradication phase. She therefore supported the draft resolution, particularly the provision related to the immunization of travellers under the International Health Regulations (2005).

Dr DEGROOF (Belgium) expressed concern about the suggestion that an annex should be added to the International Health Regulations (2005), dealing with compulsory immunization of travellers, since the Regulations had not even come into force yet. However, a standing recommendation under the Regulations would be acceptable, and he could therefore support the draft resolution.

Dr ASSOGBA (Benin) said that wild poliovirus had last been detected in his country in 2004. The Government had implemented the strategies recommended by WHO, including: supplementary immunization campaigns, which had achieved coverage of over 95%; active surveillance of acute flaccid paralysis, with a rate achieved of 2.4 cases per 100 000 children aged under 15 in 2006; and the maintenance of routine immunization coverage of more than 90%, reaching 93% in 2006. The Government aimed to reduce the risk of cross-border transmission of wild polioviruses by organizing joint immunization campaigns with neighbouring countries, monitoring travellers at its borders, and financing activities in order to prevent the re-emergence of poliomyelitis in the post-eradication phase.

Dr NYIKAL (Kenya) said that his country had reported two cases of imported poliomyelitis in 2006, after 22 years free of the disease. Three supplementary immunization campaigns had been conducted, and 11 subnational campaigns in collaboration with neighbouring countries. Those campaigns imposed a great financial burden and jeopardized routine immunization. Countries needed support if they were to remain poliomyelitis-free; it was a matter of global as well as national concern. He supported the draft resolution, particularly subparagraphs 3(1) and 3(2) on the need to provide technical and financial support.

Dr AYDINLI (Turkey) said that the world would remain at risk from poliomyelitis until the transmission of wild polioviruses had completely stopped. Turkey was concerned about the risk of importing poliovirus from Africa and some countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The proposal to immunize travellers from poliomyelitis-infected areas appeared to have a sound scientific basis. WHO was ensuring that expertise was available to countries that intended to impose stricter immunization requirements. Turkey provided support to WHO and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in their poliomyelitis eradication activities in Afghanistan and other countries. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr KANDUN (Indonesia) said that, since a recent outbreak of poliomyelitis caused by imported poliovirus, his country needed to review its current policy for travellers to areas in which polioviruses were circulating. He supported the proposals to establish temporary or standing recommendations under the International Health Regulations (2005), once they entered into force; to increase the coverage of routine immunization to above 90%; and to conduct supplementary immunization campaigns whenever appropriate.

Both cross-border and long-distance importation of polioviruses remained a threat for Indonesia and other developing countries. The use of poliomyelitis vaccines continued to be required in all countries. Indonesia had suffered a major outbreak of poliomyelitis caused by circulating vaccine-derived polioviruses, which had paralysed 43 children on the island of Madura, where routine immunization services had been suspended following the economic crisis of 1998.

Dr AL-SALEH (Kuwait) noted that some countries had eradicated poliomyelitis, only for it to re-emerge after one or two years. It might be better to target an entire region rather than an individual country. Paragraph 2(2) of the draft resolution should be amended to read: "... countries in which wild poliovirus is circulating or has recently been circulating in accordance with temporary or standing recommendations ...".

Professor FAIZ (Bangladesh) said that his country had suffered cases of poliomyelitis due to imported polioviruses in March 2006, after almost five years of freedom from the disease. The Government had conducted two rounds of immunization in March/April 2006 and a further campaign in October/November 2006. Two rounds of immunization would be carried out every year until its neighbour, India, became poliomyelitis-free. The border between Bangladesh and India was so long that it might not be economically feasible to institute enforcement measures under the International Health Regulations (2005). He supported the proposal to immunize travellers entering or leaving poliomyelitis-endemic areas.

Dr HAO Yang (China) said that his country was conducting immunization programmes and other measures so that it stayed poliomyelitis-free and prevented the potential entry of wild polioviruses. He was concerned that some countries that had eradicated poliomyelitis had suffered new cases as a result of the use of live-attenuated oral poliomyelitis vaccines. WHO should refine its immunization strategy and promote the use of inactivated vaccines. His country was also working to mitigate the potential risks arising from infectious poliovirus materials.

Dr ALA (Philippines) said that immunization was a public health priority in her country, which had been poliomyelitis-free for almost six years, but the risk of importing polioviruses was high. The national "Reaching every infant in every village" strategy, adapted from WHO's "Reaching Every District" strategy, had improved routine immunization coverage. Integrated child-survival monitoring tools were especially valuable in certain districts that were home to about 50% of unimmunized children. An Expanded Programme on Immunization surveillance officer had been assigned to every region in the country. Surveillance of acute flaccid paralysis remained of a high quality, although financing for active surveillance in sentinel sites and hospitals was a concern.

All countries should conduct laboratory surveys and prepare inventories of retained wild poliovirus materials, especially those that had been certified poliomyelitis-free. She agreed that travellers entering or leaving poliomyelitis-endemic countries should be fully immunized.

Ms NGHATANGA (Namibia) said that an outbreak of wild poliovirus infection in her country in May 2006 had affected 19 people. The Government had responded within 72 hours, with technical and material support from partners including WHO and UNICEF and a prompt response from local nongovernmental organizations and the business community. The Government had provided 80% of the funds needed to control the outbreak, a three-round vaccination campaign had been carried out and the last case had been recorded on 26 June 2006.

Since the outbreak, technical cooperation with Angola had increased. Two meetings had been held to discuss cross-border immunization campaigns and to set dates for the national supplementary immunization campaigns planned for June and July 2007. Surveillance remained a challenge, however. The Reaching Every District approach was strengthening routine immunization at district level. She supported the draft resolution.

Professor IANCU (Romania) said that the persistent transmission of wild poliovirus in areas bordering the European Region posed a real threat of importation to the Region, which had been declared poliomyelitis-free. National and regional poliomyelitis eradication programmes must be maintained. Romania was one of the 43 Member States in the European Region conducting national surveillance of acute flaccid paralysis and was one of 21 countries in the Region that had achieved a detection rate of one case per 100 000 children under 15 years of age. In over 80% of such cases, two adequate stool specimens had been tested in accredited laboratories. Further efforts were required in

order to ensure that acute flaccid paralysis surveillance remained sustainable. In 2005, some 97% of the target population received three doses of vaccine. Romania was fully meeting the targets for completeness and timeliness of reporting, compared with a level of less than 80% the previous year.

Dr MELNIKOVA (Russian Federation) said that recommendations on vaccination against poliomyelitis for people travelling from regions where poliovirus was circulating should be included in the International Health Regulations (2005). She supported a process of amending the Regulations for the long-term use of poliomyelitis vaccines and biocontainment of poliovirus materials in order to minimize the risk of the re-emergence of poliomyelitis once eradicated. She also supported the continued provision of technical and financial support to countries where poliovirus was circulating and those at high risk of importation of poliovirus. In July 2006, her country had pledged US\$ 18 million to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative at the G8 summit meeting.

Dr ASLANYAN (Canada) supported the draft resolution and the renewed focus on eradication. The possible re-emergence of poliomyelitis as a global problem was of great concern to Canada. His country had contributed almost Can\$ 200 million to the Initiative and would continue to provide targeted support in the remaining endemic countries.

Dr NJEPUOME (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the African group, said that, notwithstanding significant success worldwide towards interrupting the transmission of wild poliovirus, four countries including her own had yet to reach that goal. In May 2006, Nigeria had introduced “Immunization Plus Days”, reducing the number of cases of wild poliovirus infection to fewer than 80 in the first quarter of 2007. African governments remained committed to implementing the relevant Health Assembly resolutions, in order to eradicate poliomyelitis from the continent. The endemic countries committed themselves to working with poliomyelitis-free Member States, donors and other partners to this end; bordering States should synchronize their supplementary immunization activities, as they had done from 2000 to 2002. Countries to which the wild poliovirus was imported should receive full international support.

He supported the draft resolution but proposed two amendments. Paragraph 2(2) should be replaced by the following paragraph: “to review, and if appropriate, revise national policy on immunization of travellers from countries in which poliovirus is circulating, to reduce the risks and consequences of poliovirus importation”. Paragraph 3(4) should be replaced by the text: “to initiate the process to examine the potential usefulness of a standing recommendation under the International Health Regulations (2005) to reduce the risk of the international spread of poliovirus”.

Mr GAUDÊNCIO (Brazil) supported the draft resolution, emphasizing the need for a new vaccination policy for international travellers under the International Health Regulations (2005). Resources must be guaranteed, and vaccination and surveillance strategies made viable, to achieve global poliomyelitis eradication. He underlined the request to the Director-General in paragraph 3(5) to formulate a plan for the post-eradication era, including the use of intramuscular vaccines to replace oral vaccines.

Dr KEBELA ILUNGA (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that his country had been poliomyelitis-free for five years, but that new cases had appeared in four border provinces in 2006, all in non-vaccinated children. Member States in the African Region should synchronize cross-border vaccination campaigns in areas where the poliovirus was still circulating, and strengthen routine immunization in order to increase coverage with three doses of oral poliomyelitis vaccine. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr ST. JOHN (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Caribbean Community, said that they were largely poliomyelitis-free and would continue high levels of immunization, currently at 90% to 95%. Their policy was to inform travellers of the need for

susceptible persons to be immunized when travelling to countries where poliovirus continued to circulate.

The Caribbean Epidemiology Centre assured surveillance for acute flaccid paralysis and provided training for health professionals. In preparation for the Cricket World Cup 2007, the Community countries had responded to the risk of poliomyelitis importation by implementing centralized daily reporting of diseases and syndromes. Some countries had immunized susceptible adults, particularly those working in tourism and the security forces. That framework had improved implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005).

She urged all concerned to continue their support for the efforts of the four remaining endemic countries to eradicate poliomyelitis, and supported the draft resolution.

Mrs BONNIN (France) requested clarification about adding an annex to the International Health Regulations (2005). She shared the concerns expressed by the delegate of Belgium on reopening discussions on those Regulations, which could be a long and risky exercise. In such an event, she would support the use of a more flexible mechanism.

Mr MENESES (Mexico) said that significant progress had been made towards eradicating wild polioviruses, even though poliomyelitis remained endemic in four countries owing to low immunization coverage. Local and national leaders in those countries should seek to improve security and implement immunization campaigns and thus protect global public health. Given the risks associated with a failure to eradicate poliomyelitis, immunization coverage must be maintained (it currently stood at 97% in Mexico). The draft resolution should be adopted.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) supported the concerns expressed by the delegates of Belgium and France at the suggestion of an additional annex to the International Health Regulations (2005). As the largest single financial contributor to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, his Government believed that poliomyelitis eradication was feasible. All Member States should remain focused on that goal, and on garnering the human and financial resources necessary to reaching that objective, nationally and globally.

At the current end-stages of eradication, all countries should reduce the risk of importing the virus and ensure they had the ability to detect circulating poliovirus rapidly and respond effectively. Political leadership in Africa, the Middle East and Asia was essential in order to improve the quality of supplementary immunization campaigns, increase routine immunization coverage and enhance surveillance for acute flaccid paralysis.

The reintroduction of poliovirus was a major concern for all Member States. Recommendations from his country's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and WHO had established some precedent in requiring that travellers to poliomyelitis-endemic areas should be vaccinated. Although there was limited evidence in its support, the recommendation that all travellers from countries where poliomyelitis was circulating should be fully immunized could also prove to be an effective tool in eradicating poliomyelitis. A standing recommendation on poliomyelitis immunization for such people, established under the Regulations after their entry into force in June 2007, would be a possible way to implement that measure. Poliomyelitis would appear on the list of diseases for which immediate notification was required under the Regulations once they came into effect. All States should adhere to that reporting requirement immediately, on a voluntary basis, and should remain vigilant against importation of wild poliovirus.

Given the significance of the potential further international spread of poliovirus in the final stages of poliomyelitis eradication, he fully supported the draft resolution.

Miss DE HOZ (Argentina) said that the entire American continent had been free of poliomyelitis for many years. Her country had begun implementing the International Health Regulations (2005) on a voluntary basis, but it was concerned at the reference to a "potential standing recommendation" in paragraph 3(4) of the draft resolution. Moreover, since those Regulations had not yet entered into force, she had misgivings about reopening discussions on them.

Dr AHMED (Pakistan) commended the spirit of the draft resolution and supported it in general. However, he aligned himself with the position of the delegate of India regarding paragraphs 2(1) and 2(2) on the immunization of travellers.

Mr MABUZA (Swaziland) supported the draft resolution. Poliomyelitis eradication strategies were being implemented in his country and there had been no wild poliovirus cases. The Government was financing the procurement of all oral poliomyelitis vaccine, thus demonstrating its political will to achieve eradication. Sustaining current levels of poliomyelitis vaccine coverage and wild poliovirus surveillance, however, suffered from lack of resources. Falling levels of vaccination coverage could adversely affect his country's implementation of eradication strategies. He therefore appealed to WHO for assistance in accessing vaccines through the GAVI Alliance.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that, despite the current situation, his country had been free of poliomyelitis since January 2000. Most children were immunized and national immunization days took place annually; those in 2006 resulted in the immunization of more than 4.25 million children under the age of five years. Routine immunization coverage and surveillance of acute flaccid paralysis had improved. Iraq was also taking steps to monitor oral poliomyelitis vaccine coverage at district level, conduct mopping-up activities in high-risk areas, hold meetings with neighbouring governments on preventing cross-border transmission, train staff in the Expanded Programme on Immunization and surveillance activities, and equip the national laboratory with the necessary resources for accreditation as a national poliovirus laboratory.

Dr SEVER (Rotary International), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, pledged the continued commitment of Rotary International to ending poliomyelitis worldwide. Rotarians from more than 160 countries had voted in April 2007 to continue supporting eradication until certification was reached. In February 2007, stakeholder consultations had reached broad consensus that the goal of poliomyelitis eradication was feasible and realistic. Poliomyelitis outbreaks following importations of the poliovirus could be controlled.

The success of the global effort currently rested on the ability of the governments of the four remaining poliomyelitis-endemic countries to implement immunization activities that reached every child. The leadership and oversight of the heads of State of the four countries were essential to mobilize government resources, coordinate ministries, monitor progress and hold officials accountable at all levels of government.

As the second biggest donor to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, Rotary International was well aware of the extraordinary investment by the international donor community over the previous 19 years. However, the donor community must complement the efforts of the poliomyelitis-affected countries by providing urgently needed funds to close the funding gap of US\$ 575 million for 2007–2008. The G8 countries were urged to take rapid action to operationalize their poliomyelitis-funding commitments made in Gleneagles, Scotland, in 2005. Rotary International also called on the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and countries in Asia, Europe and South America that had never contributed to that historic effort. Without prompt financial help, the opportunity to achieve poliomyelitis eradication could be lost forever, and related gains in routine childhood immunization, global surveillance capacity for communicable diseases, and the momentum needed to achieve other global child survival targets could be imperilled.

The support of WHO and UNICEF remained crucial for proper planning, community mobilization, and implementation of high-quality immunization activities.

Dr AYLWARD (Polio Eradication Initiative) explained that there was no proposal for an annex or an amendment to the International Health Regulations (2005) that would require reopening of negotiations at the current time. The only issue under discussion was the use, if necessary, of provisions in the form of a temporary or standing recommendation for the management of the international spread of poliomyelitis in the future.

On the question of the burden of disease due to imported and indigenous poliomyelitis, he noted that, in 2005, half the poliomyelitis cases worldwide had occurred as a result of outbreaks in poliomyelitis-free countries. Owing to the implementation of guidance given by the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly in 2006, the proportion of cases in poliomyelitis-free areas had been reduced to less than 6% of all cases. However, the management of cases in poliomyelitis-free countries had still cost the programme and Member States more than US\$ 450 million since 2003.

Implementation of the provisions in the draft resolution regarding immunization of travellers was feasible, with limited cost implications, as evidenced in the comments made by delegates from endemic and reinfected countries, and in the implementation of a similar recommendation for travellers to the hajj in 2006 and 2007.

The current Poliomyelitis Eradication Initiative differed significantly from that considered the previous year. It included new tools for interrupting wild poliovirus transmission and new tactics for limiting its international spread and interrupting transmission in the endemic foci that remained. There were also new commitments from political organizations, heads of State and religious leaders, which would be critical in immunizing all children in the remaining infected areas.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Secretariat should prepare a revised text of the draft resolution, taking account of the amendments proposed, for consideration at a later stage.

It was so agreed.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the eighth meeting.)

The meeting rose at 12:40.

FOURTH MEETING

Wednesday, 16 May 2007, at 14:40

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN, INCLUDING PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET 2008–2009: Item 11 of the Agenda

Draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013: Item 11.1 of the Agenda (Documents A/MTSP/2008–2013/PB/2008–2009 and A/MTSP/2008–2013/PB/2008–2009 Corr.1 and Corr.2)

Proposed programme budget 2008–2009: Item 11.2 of the Agenda (Documents A/MTSP/2008–2013/PB/2008–2009 and A/MTSP/2008–2013/PB/2008–2009 Corr.1 and Corr.2)

Real estate: draft capital master plan: Item 11.3 of the Agenda (Documents A60/5 and A60/INF.DOC./3)

Dr ANTEZANA ARANÍBAR (representative of the Executive Board) said that the draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 and the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 had been reviewed by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee before their consideration by the Executive Board at its 120th session in January 2007. The Board had broadly supported the Medium-term strategic plan, its directions, priorities and core functions, noting its linkages to the Proposed programme budget, the Eleventh General Programme of Work and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The Board had also expressed broad support for the integrated budget and the approaches for financing the Medium-term strategic plan, including the three categories of financing.¹

While applauding the results-based approach, Board members had voiced some concerns about the use of historical perspectives for resource allocation in respect of assessed contributions and the application of the validation mechanism. The Board had emphasized budgetary discipline, greater efficiency and transparency, and a fuller justification of the proposed budget increase.

The Board had broadly supported the strategic objectives and Organization-wide results identified in the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009, financed by means of assessed, negotiated core and other, voluntary, contributions. Members had sought clarification on specific items, including sexual and reproductive health, noncommunicable diseases, traditional medicine, blindness, global health security, essential medicines, strengthening of health systems and United Nations reform. Although the proposed budget had increased in absolute terms, some members had expressed concern about the proportional decrease in the allocation for the African Region.

The draft capital master plan, Proposed programme budget and Medium-term strategic plan were linked and had been considered together. The current mechanism for financing capital expenditures within the overall biennial budget was inadequate. The Board had welcomed the integrated 10-year capital master plan and the inventory of the Organization's real estate. Resource requirements for the capital master plan should be integral to the biennial budget. The Board had requested the Director-General to pay due regard to the financing required to ensure the safety, health and well-being of staff, delegates and visitors.

¹ Document EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/2, summary record of the seventh meeting of the 120th session.

In order to balance resource demands across the five bienniums, the Board had requested the Director-General to review the phasing of the real estate and accommodation proposals, especially in locations where rental costs were becoming prohibitive. However, deferring capital expenditures could necessitate costly emergency repairs.

Dr NISHIYAMA (Japan) commended the revised budget document and the clear explanation for the budget increase. Japan remained committed to providing financial and technical contributions to WHO. Securing the Organization's budget was crucial. Every effort should be made, however, to spend resources more efficiently and to identify and discontinue programmes that were not cost effective or that duplicated other programmes.

Dr HAO Yang (China) supported the Medium-term strategic plan, which was rich in content and included clear goals. China's chief concern was implementation: the Organization should make full use of its technical strengths in that regard. He appreciated the plan's acknowledgement of the importance of traditional medicine. Under WHO's leadership traditional medicine could be better understood and strengthened.

He also agreed with the proposed 4% increase in the regular budget. WHO needed the finances in order to play its role as the world's largest health organization. The increase should be used in core areas and WHO should continue to increase its efficiency.

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) supported the Medium-term strategic plan, endorsed the six-item agenda, the 13 strategic objectives, and the plan to improve the management of WHO, including financial resources, provision of effective operational support and assurance of robust accountability, notably as set out in paragraph 7 of the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009. The normative function of WHO – for example the establishment through the Codex Alimentarius Commission of norms and standards for food and nutrition – was funded mainly through the assessed share of the budget. These functions should not suffer as the Organization sought to meet the many demands placed upon it. He looked forward to the monitoring of the strategic plan through the annual assessment of programme budget performance, and evaluation of the achievement of the 13 strategic objectives at the end of the six years.

He welcomed the commitment to budget discipline, the setting of priorities, and clarifications regarding the proposed increase in the regular budget. He recognized the difficulty of balancing demands, priorities and available resources. With voluntary contributions three times as much as assessed contributions, he welcomed the Director-General's focus on that fundamental shift. Member States should be made aware of the consequences of the heavy reliance on voluntary contributions, and diversion of resources away from normative functions.

He welcomed the assurances that 13% of voluntary contributions would be used to meet the budgets of strategic objectives 12 and 13. Voluntary funding should meet its share of administration and delivery costs. The regular budget should not be used to supplement overhead costs of voluntary funding without the express agreement of Member States.

Finally, the 2008–2009 budget proposal called for development of a new element: core voluntary funding, which was unearmarked and could be allocated as required. Canada viewed such funding as specifically intended for development at the field level, and he requested clarification on the use of such funds. He had some concerns about the planning of a 100% increase in such funding, as voluntary contributions were by nature unpredictable.

Mrs REITENBACH (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, said that the candidate countries Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia; and the Republic of Moldova, Switzerland, and Ukraine aligned themselves with her statement. The European Union favoured a continued focus on WHO's core functions, identified in the Eleventh General Programme of Work; the global health agenda; and WHO's role as a leading standard-setting organization in international health. However, the lack of gender mainstreaming throughout the document was a cause for concern, as the commitments

contained in the draft resolution on gender currently before the Health Assembly were not adequately reflected. Gender equality indicators should be incorporated into the strategic objectives.

At the 120th session of the Executive Board, the European Union had called for more emphasis on global health security in the five main areas of the Eleventh General Programme of Work. The emphasis subsequently placed on prevention and health promotion in the draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 and the draft Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 had been appreciated. However, even fewer funds had been allocated to sexual and reproductive health. That allocation should be increased, particularly in the light of the feminization of HIV/AIDS. Greater alignment was also needed between WHO's strategic objectives and the Millennium Development Goals related to sexual and reproductive health. WHO had a key role in UNAIDS, yet strategic objective 2 made no mention of WHO's participation in the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations, and contained no indicators for WHO's role in the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors.

She welcomed the increased resources allocated to noncommunicable diseases, but doubted whether the low budget levels for that area could cope with the growing burden of global noncommunicable diseases. She questioned how resources were being allocated within strategic objectives 3, 6 and 7, and wanted better linkages between strategic objectives 1, 2 and 7.

The concentration of the strategic objectives into 13 key items achieved greater synergy and consistency. The elaboration of particular strategies made the plan clearer and avoided redundancy and fragmentation, but policy priorities included in each objective lacked transparency. Some mandates of WHO were not sufficiently reflected in the expected results, particularly access to medicines. The Organization's monitoring of the effects of trade agreements in the health sector and devising strategies for health research should be highlighted.

The prevention and containment of infectious diseases and achieving several of the health-related Millennium Development Goals made WHO's leadership in multisectoral efforts to contain antimicrobial resistance paramount. The rational use of medicines needed to be encouraged, but antimicrobial resistance should be at the core of the communicable diseases agenda and methods of measuring the global burden of disease caused by antimicrobial resistance should be explored.

The revised Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 revealed some shifts between the strategic objectives. How would the Organization's work be prioritized in the event of further budget constraints? More clarity was needed in areas such as aggregate costs: cost efficiencies were essential, but, for example, how much did the Organization spend on publications each year? More information on the recently established group in charge of publication policy would determine whether all economies and efficiencies were being made. She looked forward to the next report on publication policy; to analysis of the financial implications of special days for diseases, such as World Malaria Day; to clarification on how the plan could take account of new resolutions adopted during the six-year period of the plan; and on how donors of voluntary contributions would align themselves with the strategic objectives.

Greater transparency regarding the specific allocation of financial and human resources envisaged in the draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 was also required. With more than 70% of resources going to the regions, the administrative and management capacities of the regional offices should be reinforced. The failure in some regions to implement the recommendations of the External Auditor was a matter for concern. She proposed monitoring the plan's implementation through a review clause that would give Member States the opportunity to report, for example, in two years.

The plan was more consistent with reforms to the United Nations system. Nevertheless, the potential for enhanced cooperation between WHO and other United Nations bodies needed to be addressed more clearly throughout the strategic objectives and emphasized in strategic objective 12. Targets appeared to be largely defined by the WHO country cooperation strategy, rather than by the planning process of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the United Nations system as a whole. Modes of collaboration, division of labour and information sharing should be defined clearly in order to avoid costly duplication.

Mr GREEN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) welcomed the changes made to the draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 following the 120th session of the Executive Board, particularly the focus of the strategic objectives and the one clear objective on health systems. The fact that that objective involved 12 Organization-wide expected results suggested that a coherent approach on health systems needed more than simply combining the work undertaken across the Organization.

Little had changed in the content of strategic objective 12 or other strategic objectives. For example, there appeared to be no mention of the recommendations of the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors. WHO was undoubtedly engaged in the process of United Nations reform, particularly in the eight pilot countries. The draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 should provide objectives and indicators which enabled reporting on improvements in: its collaboration with other United Nations bodies; WHO processes; and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

He welcomed the revisions made to the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 and the efforts made to take account of the Board's comments. He supported the proposed budget. Nevertheless, certain worrying trends in WHO's budget would require serious consideration and consultation over the next two years. The Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 included an increase of just over 15% to more than US\$ 4000 million, yet the possibility of an increase to around US\$ 5500 million by 2014–2015 had already been discussed; should the budget continue to increase with each biennium? Previously adopted resolutions should be closely examined in order to determine whether any might be phased out, which could produce significant savings.

Although paragraph 69 of the draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 stated that a significant proportion of WHO's budget should be financed through assessed contributions, that proportion had declined further since January 2007, and it was hard to reconcile those two circumstances: the United Kingdom, like many other Member States, would not be in a position to agree to large increases in assessed contributions.

Rather than a system of automatic overall increases, there should be more effective deployment of existing resources. The Director-General had already indicated her commitment to making difficult choices. Member States must share the burden. WHO's planned efficiency savings of some US\$ 5 million needed clear monitoring. As the benefits of United Nations reform filtered through, savings made in "back office" functions should be devoted to front-line activities.

He distinguished between predictable and unpredictable funding. An increase in predictable, multiyear financial commitments was needed, with fewer earmarked voluntary contributions and more negotiated core voluntary contributions, which he would not be in a position to agree to.

Dr STEIGER (United States of America) welcomed the integration of a medium-term strategy into WHO's results-based management framework and presentation of its strategic direction, core functions and strategic objectives. Understandably, the Organization sought to achieve a better balance between assessed and voluntary contributions. Assessed contributions were not a tool for maintaining balance through progressive increases and he welcomed the fact that the revised Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 did not advocate working to increase assessed contributions to a specified level.

He expressed appreciation to the Director-General that possible efficiencies in implementation, prioritized programmes in the revised programme budget, and potential ways of offsetting proposed increases had all been identified. Information on possible savings and the phasing out of activities should be integrated into future programme budget documents, with indications given under the relevant strategic objective.

Member States also needed to exercise discipline with respect to the number and frequency of resolutions adopted, and he echoed comments on the need to examine the relevance of past resolutions. Overall, the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009, including the 4% increase in assessed contributions, was acceptable, reflecting the importance his country placed on WHO's activities.

While certain donors might be willing to accept the proposals concerning negotiated core contributions, others, including the bodies of his Government that made voluntary contributions, had

specific requirements that might not be compatible with their participation in the process. Core negotiated resources should include those made available in response to specific appeals from the Director-General in line with strategic priorities. The mid-term review and programme budget performance assessment were valuable for monitoring the budget over the next biennium and beyond.

He supported strategic objective 4 on the understanding that the language used in the draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 and Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 was not intended to suggest the existence or creation of a new human right to sexual and reproductive health. The strategic plan allocated resources to implementing WHO's strategy on accelerating progress towards the attainment of internationally agreed development goals and targets related to reproductive health, but he recalled that at the Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly his delegation had not endorsed the strategy.¹ Nothing in the documents under consideration encouraged or compelled Member States to expand the availability of legal abortion. Furthermore, as indicated in resolution WHA55.19, "primary health care services" did not include abortion except when consistent with national and, where applicable, local law, and with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds.

It was not clear whether indicator 12.3.3 under strategic objective 12, on the proportion of trade agreements appropriately reflecting public health interests, applied to multilateral or bilateral agreements or both, or what guidance document was being referred to. He questioned the Secretariat's competence to advise Member States accurately on the potential implications of trade agreements. Any information on trade agreements provided by WHO must be unbiased and evidence-based, and should be cleared with WTO and WIPO.

Mr VAN DER HOEVEN (Netherlands) expressed concern at the growing imbalance between assessed and voluntary contributions to WHO's budget. As a Member State organization with global responsibility for normative work and technical assistance, it was imperative, for its credibility and integrity, that a significant portion of its budget should be made up of assessed contributions, in contrast to funds provided by a small number of donors.

In 2006, the Director-General had reapplied Financial Regulation XV by reporting on the financial and administrative implications of draft resolutions, with minimal effect. Member States should assess the costs of draft resolutions when adopting them.

The Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 included an overall increase of 15.2% but only a 4% increase in assessed contributions. If the imbalance was not to worsen, budget increases should be financed by assessed contribution increases of at least the same percentage, and he urged the Director-General to work towards balancing the various sources of funding, including by increasing the amount of predictable voluntary contributions.

With relevance to strategic objective 9, he supported maintaining WHO's contribution to the Codex Alimentarius Commission and related activities for the biennium 2008–2009 at no less than the 2006–2007 level of US\$ 1.2 million.

Dr URBINA (El Salvador) echoed the concerns expressed by the delegate for the United States of America with regard to the strategic objective on sexual and reproductive health, and specifically the issue of abortion, which ran contrary to the laws, values and Christian principles of his country.

Prince BIN AHMED BIN ABDELAZIZ (Saudi Arabia) recalled that, in response to the problem of visual impairment, resolution WHA59.25 requested the Director-General, among other things, to give priority to preventing avoidable blindness and visual impairment and to add prevention of avoidable blindness and visual impairment to the draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 and the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009. His delegation wished to propose amendments to those documents to reflect the resolution.

¹ Document WHA57/2004/REC/3, summary record of the seventh meeting of Committee A.

Dr AL-RAJHI (Saudi Arabia) added that the proposals were intended to strengthen and clarify the strategic plan and budget documents. In document A/MTSP/2008–2013/PB/2008–2009, he proposed the addition of the words “and visual impairment, including blindness” at the end of the title of strategic objective 3 and the insertion in the box with indicators and targets of a fourth bulleted item that would read “To halt and begin to reverse current incidents of disability from visual impairment, including that caused by blindness”. He further proposed the insertion of the phrase “and visual impairment, including blindness” at the end of the second bulleted item in the box on the Secretariat’s focus, at the end of the Organization-wide expected results 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6. In the Proposed programme budget, the same words should be added at the end of the heading and Organization-wide expected results 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6.

He shared the concern expressed by the delegate of the United States of America on strategic objective 4.

Dr DAHN (Liberia), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, expressed concern that some targets ascribed to the 13 strategic objectives, such as a two-thirds reduction in the mortality rate of vaccine-preventable diseases and the elimination of malaria in seven targeted countries by 2013, would require more resources than those provided for in the draft Medium-term strategic plan. She asked how the commitments to health made by the G8 countries and African leaders would be met, and recommended that the issue should be examined by the Executive Board. She also expressed concern that the allocation to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in 2010–2011 had been reduced by 4%, whereas the allocations to the other 12 strategic objectives all showed an increase, ranging from 6% for strategic objective 1 to 53% for strategic objective 4. Moreover, for 2012–2013, the allocations to strategic objectives 1 and 2, of great importance to the African Region, represented the lowest increase, of 5%. How would those figures align with the Director-General’s stated vision? Strengthening or establishing social protection and health systems was a priority for the African Region. What was the proposed budget in the Medium-term strategic plan for those programmes?

She welcomed the increase in the total budget for the African Region from US\$ 900 million in the current biennium to US\$ 1200 million in 2008–2009, but was concerned that the proportion allocated to the African Region had fallen from 28.7% to 28.2%. In contrast to the other five regions, the proportion of the proposed allocations to the African Region for 2008–2009 had not increased. She asked what action would be taken to ensure alignment between the financial resources allocated and the Director-General’s vision for the health of Africa’s people.

Ms TOR-DE TARLÉ (France) fully supported the draft Medium-term strategic plan and the proposed programme budget, and commended the presentation of the strategic objectives and results-based management, which reflected a desire for greater transparency and strengthened links between headquarters, regions and country offices. Predicting results would enable WHO to better measure its performance. However, the amount of detail varied greatly between strategic objectives. Some did not reflect the Organization’s mandates. For example, the predicted results of the establishment, by virtue of resolution WHA59.24, of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property were not reflected in strategic objective 11. Did that mean that no financial resources had been allocated to that Group or that the overall financing of that objective would need to be changed? Furthermore, presenting the predicted results of and the overall resources allocated to activities that were divided among several strategic objectives would enhance the transparency of the strategic plan and programme budget. Examples of such activities were reproductive health and combating sexually-transmitted diseases, which were divided between strategic objectives 2 and 4, and implementing the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, which was divided between objectives 3 and 9.

WHO should cooperate with other United Nations agencies, with vertical and horizontal funding programmes, and international financial institutions. Since cooperation with United Nations agencies affected all 13 strategic objectives, it should have been integrated as an objective in all of them, not solely in objective 12. The Medium-term strategic plan should focus on strengthening such

cooperation; however, only a brief reference had been made in strategic objective 11 to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and to the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID) – one of WHO's key partners.

Since expenditure on human resources represented more than 42% of the budget, the Medium-term strategic plan would benefit from the projected medium-term and long-term management of human resources, and greater coordination was needed between the budget and management of the Organization's human resources. In the context of WHO's performance, the Internal Auditor's recommendations should be followed up and integrated into strategic objective 13.

She requested clarification of the role of multilingualism and the link between the Medium-term strategic plan, which contained some projected results on multilingualism, and the action plan on multilingualism which was on the agenda of the 121st session of the Executive Board.

Mr WONG (Singapore) welcomed the reduced number of strategic objectives, and urged further streamlining of the strategic plan. He also welcomed the emphasis that both the strategic plan and the programme budget placed on communicable diseases, and the level of resources allocated to combating avian influenza and other emerging infectious diseases. However, WHO should review regularly the implementation of its broad and ambitious plans. He commended the transparency of the budgetary process.

Mr BRUN (Norway) said that the proposed Medium-term strategic plan clarified objectives through indicators and targets. He supported the proposed increased budget and improved balance between assessed and voluntary contributions. He concurred with the comments made by the delegate of the Netherlands in that regard. Norway emphasized the Organization's work on sexual and reproductive health. Budget allocations to that area should be increased and shown through a separate budget line in order to enhance transparency. He endorsed the statement of the delegate of Germany on: gender mainstreaming; WHO's role in assisting countries in the use of flexibilities in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property; coherence between WHO's role and the United Nations system-wide planning tools; and noncommunicable diseases.

Mr VAN MEEUWEN (Belgium) expressed satisfaction with the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009, the strategic plan, and the reduced number of strategic objectives. He commended the clear and quantifiable objectives presented in terms of expected results to be achieved. However, the proposed change would not make comparison with past results easy, as areas of work in the previous budget overlapped several of the strategic objectives for the biennium 2008–2009.

He expressed concern over the growing imbalance between resources for the regular budget and voluntary contributions. WHO had to have sufficient resources to fulfil its mandate. Its role as the leading United Nations agency in the health sector and its normative function depended on its human resources. He was concerned that WHO might be transforming itself into a United Nations fund. The increase in the regular budget should be proportionally the same as that of extrabudgetary contributions. Voluntary contributions were unpredictable and could be negotiated for use as general resources, although that would constitute only a short-term solution.

It was essential to prioritize among the 13 strategic objectives proposed, so that decisions could be taken in case of insufficient resources to meet all the Organization's commitments. He was also concerned over the undue importance given to the technical aspects of combating diseases, when it was recognized that the sustainability of health interventions depended on operational health services responding to people's needs. Health services had to be given enough financial resources to make them accessible to those that needed them most, namely the poor and the marginalized.

He expressed disappointment that no explicit reference had been made to the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, particularly those concerning alignment, harmonization and coordination.

Mr MCKERNAN (New Zealand) endorsed the draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013. The clear goals and targets would only be achieved through improved management and capacity building at regional and country levels. He welcomed the specific focus on underlying social, cultural

and economic determinants of health and the related budget increase. He had noted the level of contributions made by the voluntary sector to WHO's overall budget and reiterated the concerns expressed by other Member States about long-term financing. WHO should be the only organization to shape the global health agenda. The proposed increase in the programme budget was significant in both absolute and percentage terms. However, certain comments in audit reports, leading to a number of recommendations where financial controls and management action had fallen short, were a cause for concern. He requested the Director-General to follow up on all such outstanding recommendations so that further budget resources were spent efficiently. He supported results-based planning and budgeting in order to increase transparency and accountability.

Dr BUDIHARDJA (Indonesia) welcomed the draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013. Several priorities reflected Indonesia's health development strategic plan. They included: reducing maternal mortality; strengthening health systems and health access; building capacity to implement the International Health Regulations (2005); and tackling chronic noncommunicable diseases. His Government had made poverty reduction a priority, and was committed to addressing health inequality through the provision of health insurance for almost 60 million poor people. Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals must be supported with actions and resources. Reducing the maternal mortality ratio, as laid down in Goal 5, would require substantial resources. Hence a technically sound approach needed to be introduced into the draft Medium-term strategic plan that would enable cost-effective, tailor-made interventions to be devised, particularly for countries with high maternal mortality and limited resources.

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, endorsed the draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 and welcomed the emphasis on accountability, performance and results-based management. The draft Medium-term strategic plan could be used in aligning WHO's programme budget with national priorities.

He supported the draft Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 with its inclusion of regular and voluntary contributions in a single budget. Implementing the budget proposals would require WHO to work closely with all its partners. Resources should be equitably distributed between countries, requiring transfer of between 70% and 75% of WHO's resources to the regions and countries for implementation. The predictability of the increased voluntary contributions was of great importance. At the same time, the Organization must increase its effectiveness and efficiency. The need for flexibility in cases of natural disasters and complex emergencies should also be taken into account.

The proposed overall increase of 15.2% over the current biennium in the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 reflected the needs of Member States and confidence in WHO's work. However, in order to preserve its identity and retain the support of its membership, the Organization had to balance assessed and voluntary contributions. During implementation, WHO needed to take account of national particularities, especially when problems were compounded by complex emergencies, a lack of human and financial resources and weak managerial capacity. Making pregnancy safer, child and adolescent health, women's health, food safety, and research policy and promotion all remained underfunded. A lack of financial flexibility impeded the transfer of resources to underfunded areas of work.

Dr BUSUTTIL (Malta), referring to strategic objective 4 of the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013, said that the references to sexual and reproductive health services contained in the Medium-term strategic plan should not be interpreted as creating an obligation on any party to consider abortion a legitimate form of sexual or reproductive health service.

Dr TANGI (Tonga) welcomed the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013, which provided a clear direction for the Organization over the six years ahead. However, he doubted WHO's capacity to implement such a broad agenda. The 15.2% increase in the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 matched the priorities set out in the budget, which focused on emerging health problems that were the subject of many Health Assembly resolutions. There was a tendency to adopt resolutions without

understanding their financial implications. The proposed budget should make the Medium-term strategic plan operational, at least for the first two years. He welcomed the proposed increase of 21% in funding for noncommunicable and chronic diseases. He shared the general concern over the integrity of the Organization in the face of a smaller percentage of assessed contributions. However, the late Director-General's mooted idea of increasing Member States' assessed contributions had not drawn strong support.

Dr KHALFAN (Bahrain) supported the comments of the delegates of Saudi Arabia on sexual and reproductive health and visual impairment.

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) welcomed the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 and the improved allocation of resources in the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009, which should underpin areas of work where good progress might be made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Overall progress could be clearly evaluated. Goals, objectives and expected results needed clarification. It was essential to maintain links with the Programme budget 2006–2007 and show the progress made over the previous biennium towards the Goals.

WHO should receive a larger proportion of its financial resources from the regular budget than from voluntary contributions, for the sake of good governance, integrity and low transaction costs. All voluntary donations should be used for priorities agreed on by the governing bodies, and the management of existing resources should be improved. The strategic objectives should be prioritized and the clarity of the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 enhanced. Indication should be given of the Organization's priorities if it failed to obtain the expected resources. The Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 integrated the work carried out under the total available resources, which should enable Member States to improve governance of expenditure in line with Health Assembly priorities.

Dr SUWIT WIBULPOLPRASERT (Thailand), referring to the Director-General's foreword to the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013, expressed concern that a bullet point, on the broader aspects of health and its interaction with other sectors through the Commission on Social Determinants of Health, had been omitted from the current version. The current wording reflected an inadequate understanding by the Secretariat of the complex interrelation between social factors and health. The Director-General should reinstate the reference to the Commission in the foreword.

He urged more active interest in the Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property and more leadership in support of its work, without which it would fail. The wishes of the previous Director-General should be respected.

He expressed concern that the increase in assessed contributions was only 4%, when Member States were prepared to pay more. The proportion of assessed contributions would decrease further while voluntary contributions were earmarked in order to serve donors' interests. That meant that all Member States were paying to maintain a WHO Secretariat worldwide that was simply serving donors' interests and neglecting those of developing countries. The Director-General should provide an analysis combining non-earmarked contributions with assessed contributions, so that Member States could observe the trend in budgetary funds that were free from donor influence and be reassured that they were not paying the Secretariat to promote the interests of a handful of countries.

His Government was considering making a small, non-earmarked contribution to WHO, in order to help to make the Secretariat less biased and more transparent. Only the previous day, it had emerged in the drafting group on avian influenza that a WHO collaborating centre had sent the virus to a laboratory outside the terms of reference and had prevented a specimen from being shared. Instead of investigating the Centre's conduct, the Secretariat had erased the terms of reference from the web site. It had criticized other centres for not sharing the virus, but taken no action against the Centre in question. The work being done by other collaborating centres was vital to the global effort to prevent an influenza pandemic, but Member States needed to be able to trust them.

Dr SOARES MARQUES DE LIMA (Sao Tome and Principe) said that the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 caused him concern. Under strategic objective 2, how would universal access to prevention, treatment and care for combating HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria be

achieved when the proposed budget had been reduced by 10% from the 2006–2007 level? Those diseases remained the principal causes of morbidity and mortality in the developing countries, particularly in Africa. Allowing for support from partners, the allocation for those objectives should be increased. Further, the 44% increase for strategic objective 3 was insufficient, given the burden imposed by chronic noncommunicable conditions, mental disorders and injuries, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, where they caused at least 80% of all deaths.

Mr KHALEEL (Maldives) acknowledged the Medium-term plan's coherent linkages between the different strategic objectives. The Secretariat should try to increase the proportion of non-earmarked voluntary contributions and direct them towards areas with greater funding gaps, in line with the strategic objectives.

Mr MENESES (Mexico) acknowledged the effort required in drafting the Medium-term strategic plan and the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009. The delegate of Thailand had lamented that the biggest contributors wielded the most influence. Mexico was the tenth largest contributor to WHO and his Government sought to ensure that the budgets of international organizations were transparent and efficient and reflected a correspondence between programme priorities and budgetary allocations. The proposed budgetary allocations would doubtless be revised in the light of the delegates' comments. Traditionally, Mexico had supported zero real growth. When the new budgetary base for WHO's activities came to be discussed, Mexico would seek to ensure that budgets were based on zero nominal growth.

Turning to the strategic objectives, he sought more specific reference to combating obesity and diabetes mellitus under efforts to prevent and reduce chronic noncommunicable conditions. The Region of the Americas was facing epidemics of obesity and diabetes mellitus that would have huge social costs in the future. All countries should try to contain those epidemics and to consider the social determinants of health and their role in those conditions. WHO must help to provide the means for regulation and self-regulation of the food industry as a means of preventing those conditions.

He welcomed the continuing campaign against tobacco consumption, and the decision to declare the Health Assembly smoke-free.

Dr AL GHAFIRI (Oman) noted the regional dimension of some health problems. For instance, 75% to 80% of cases of blindness in her country were avoidable and a resolution of the Regional Committee had expressed support for efforts to address the problem.

Ms FRUTOS (Paraguay), referring to the statements made by the delegates of the United States of America and El Salvador concerning strategic objective 4, said that there was no new human right to sexual and reproductive health and that sexual and reproductive health services did not include abortion.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that the Medium-term strategic plan should concentrate on epidemiological and demographic variables, consider the social and economic determinants of health and crisis management, and emphasize: the changing epidemiological pattern of some diseases; emerging priorities; the need for efficient financial systems; capacity building and encouraging research; and improving health systems.

The Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 should emphasize the Millennium Development Goals and total quality management. Budgetary resources should be distributed to regions on the basis of their human resources needs rather than their population.

Mrs SCHAER BOURBEAU (Switzerland) supported the statement made on behalf of the European Union on item 11.1. How would WHO's activities such as the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property be funded without being mentioned in the Medium-term strategic plan?

The draft capital master plan gave a complete picture of WHO's real estate needs. Every international organization was required to earmark in its regular budget sufficient resources to finance

infrastructure overheads and capital expenditure. The WHO Real Estate Fund had long been underfinanced owing to the understandable desire to fund programmes rather than real estate, resulting in urgent and higher remedial investment. Good building maintenance was an essential responsibility. Adequate, predictable financing must be guaranteed from the regular budget and not depend on voluntary contributions. The estimated capital expenditure costs at US\$ 22.9 million for 2008–2009 should be approved from the regular budget.

Dr AL-SHATTI (Kuwait), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region and the health ministers of the Arab League, expressed appreciation of the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013. He emphasized the prevention and reduction of disability and premature death from chronic noncommunicable diseases. The global burden of visual impairment affected some 314 million people, of whom 153 million had refractive errors, 124 million had low vision and 37 million were blind; 85% of blindness was avoidable by means of established and affordable technologies. He supported Saudi Arabia's request to include visual impairment under the third strategic objective pursuant to resolution WHA59.25.

On strategic objective 4, his country shared the concerns expressed by many Member States, including Saudi Arabia, the United States of America and Malta, about access to abortion at the primary health level and its use as a family planning tool.

Dr WANGCHUK (Bhutan) said that the Medium-term strategic plan gave clear direction to the Organization, could be aligned with country priorities and was based on results. It dealt with accountability, gave indicators and incorporated mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. He supported the Medium-term strategic plan, the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 and the proposed amendment by Saudi Arabia on strategic objective 3.

Mrs KNUTSDOTTIR (Iceland) supported the suggestion made by the delegate of Saudi Arabia in respect of strategic objective 3, whose wording should be revised accordingly.

Mr KOCHETKOV (Russian Federation) welcomed the setting of the 13 strategic objectives for at least six years in order to facilitate budgetary analysis. However, strategic objective 10 was too broad; it should only deal with health systems. Although Organization-wide expected result 7.5 was clear overall, none of its three indicators would measure progress on gender issues; such an indicator should be included.

He had concerns about the monitoring and evaluation mechanism used in the plan and budget; while there was provision for corrections to be made after a six-monthly review, it was unclear whether they would be incorporated in the following plan. Furthermore, the disparity between assessed and voluntary contributions was growing. The Russian Federation supported the small increase in the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 and encouraged WHO to work with donors in order to secure non-earmarked funds. Combating communicable and noncommunicable diseases was a priority, but insufficient resources had been allocated to that end. He emphasized a results-based management approach in the regional distribution of resources; those regions that coped best with their tasks under the Medium-term plan should receive a bigger share of resources. He supported the Medium-term strategic plan and Proposed programme budget 2008–2009.

Mr WATERBERG (Suriname), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Caribbean Community, commended the Medium-term strategic plan and Proposed programme budget 2008–2009. He agreed with previous speakers about the imbalance in extrabudgetary funds. Although vertical programming on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria had proved its worth, health systems should also be strengthened in order to provide quality services and attain the Millennium Development Goals.

The proposed increase of 4% in country contributions appeared appropriate to reduce maternal and child mortality, combat chronic diseases, implement the International Health Regulations (2005), and improve systems. Those programme areas were important to Caribbean countries, where chronic

diseases had increased dramatically; the countries comprised the second most affected region for HIV/AIDS. He looked forward to greater support as a result of the budget increase and to the direct benefits deriving from achievement of the strategic objectives. Given the steady decline in life expectancy in the Caribbean, a review of the criteria for budget allocation should be undertaken and consideration given to redistribution in favour of the Caribbean.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL thanked delegates for their recommendations and advice. The Medium-term strategic plan and Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 had been initiated by Dr Lee Jong-wook and she paid tribute to him and all her colleagues throughout the Organization who had contributed to its preparation. She had noted the requests for more emphasis on sexual and reproductive health, the African Region, visual impairment, communicable and noncommunicable diseases, health systems, medicines, partnerships and work with other bodies in the United Nations system. She had also noted the need to explore more savings through efficiency and to end some programmes. There was a wish that the Organization should preserve its normative functions and continue to advocate more resources for health through working with other partners. She was glad that some Member States had expressed concerns about the impact of some resolutions on the budget. She was grateful for the overwhelming support the proposed budget had received.

Responding to points raised by the delegate of Thailand, she explained that she took personal responsibility for any changes made in the foreword to the draft Medium-term strategic plan and Proposed programme budget 2008–2009. Tackling the social determinants of health was extremely important and she had mentioned them in her address to the Health Assembly the previous day. However, since the report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health would not be ready until June 2008 at the earliest, she had intended to present the report's recommendations for discussion at the Health Assembly in 2009. She could not pre-empt the decisions of Member States at a future Health Assembly and therefore it had not been intended to set aside a budget allocation for implementing any recommendations of the Commission until the following biennium.

Regarding the WHO collaborating centres and their work in influenza surveillance, she acknowledged their major contribution and crucial role in WHO's work. She appreciated the resources provided by countries in hosting or supporting those centres, which contributed to the Organization's scientific credibility and integrity. Some instances of conduct in some centres had raised concerns, and WHO took full responsibility for not having monitored their implementation of the relevant guidelines. The terms of reference of collaborating centres were therefore under review.

The CHAIRMAN said that he would request the Secretariat to prepare a resolution on the Medium-term strategic plan and the appropriation resolution for the financial period 2008–2009. Both would be issued the next day.

It was so agreed.

(For continuation of the discussion, see summary record of the fifth meeting, section 2.)

The meeting rose at 17:25.

FIFTH MEETING

Thursday, 17 May 2007, at 09:25

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

1. FIRST REPORT OF COMMITTEE A (Document A60/54)

Mrs BU FIGUEROA (Honduras), Rapporteur, read out the draft first report of Committee A.

The report was adopted.¹

2. DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN, INCLUDING PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET 2008–2009: Item 11 of the Agenda (continued from the fourth meeting)

Eleventh General Programme of Work: monitoring implementation: Item 11.4 of the Agenda (Documents A60/6 and A60/48)

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 provided clear guidance on action to be taken by Member States and the Secretariat in implementing the global health agenda set out in the Eleventh General Programme of Work. WHO should play a pivotal role in standardizing services and mechanisms in order to safeguard the needs of poor people, so that the concept of “health for all” continued to inspire health care services and access to them. Monitoring and evaluating the General Programme of Work and the strategic plan would be a collective responsibility. The Secretariat should develop monitoring and evaluation tools and guidelines for use by countries, and report periodically to the Health Assembly on results. Deliverables should be classified in the operational plans according to core functions.

Dr DAHN (Liberia), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, commended the Eleventh General Programme of Work and the Medium-term strategic plan, and emphasized the monitoring of implementation. Health partnerships involving civil society and the corporate sector would improve efficiency, enhance the implementation of health programmes and promote joint action on the social determinants of health. Many African countries would benefit from policy frameworks for establishing such partnerships.

The Health Assembly had acknowledged the importance of shaping the research agenda and stimulating the collection and dissemination of knowledge when monitoring implementation of the General Programme of Work. However, in many Member States capacity to conduct research and use research data was inadequate, and many key policy decisions were not based on evidence. Research strategies should therefore take into consideration the need for both capacity building in Member States and improved access to consolidated research information.

¹ See page 310.

Setting norms and standards, and promoting and monitoring compliance with them, was a crucial part of the global health agenda. The preparation of normative guidance needed to improve. Cost-effective, ethical and equitable policies should be developed for use in a variety of socioeconomic settings. The transparency of procedures for the selection and tenure of external experts should be improved. Local expertise in monitoring and evaluation should be strengthened. Networks with other partners and harmonized approaches originating from regional initiatives would also be useful.

Professor MIKHAILOVA (Russian Federation) said that health issues were increasingly important in determining priorities for global development, making WHO a lead agency in the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. She attached great importance to its initiative in strengthening links with ministries of health, governments and their technical institutions, and cooperation with other bodies in the United Nations system, nongovernmental organizations and its own country offices. Planning by WHO must be geared to concrete results. It required the combined efforts of many partners, detailed agreements on timing and monitoring, and transparency and accountability of expenditures.

She welcomed the emphasis in the Medium-term strategic plan on assisting Member States to strengthen health systems, including staffing, financing, information retrieval and scientific research. Those elements, considered by the Executive Board at its 120th session as separate objectives, had been brought together as strategic objective 10, with 12 expected results for that objective alone. The use of the term “health services” to cover so many elements was confusing. Some of the indicators used for health service development were too vague; a base-level indicator should be developed for each country, because no standardized method of evaluation was common to countries at different levels of development.

She endorsed the core functions and the 13 strategic objectives set out in the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013.

Ms WARANYA TEOKUL (Thailand) endorsed the indicators for monitoring the global health agenda summarized in Table 1 of document A60/6 and the summary of key actions in Table 2. She expressed concern, however, that too few resources had been allocated to monitoring support of health information systems. The Eleventh General Programme of Work and the Medium-term strategic plan comprised six core functions, 13 strategic objectives and 40 programmes of work, but the allocation of resources was skewed towards only a few strategic objectives. WHO should monitor the implementation of its programmes in terms of those strategic objectives which received the highest allocation of resources.

Mrs PRADHAN (Assistant Director-General) said that monitoring implementation of the Eleventh General Programme of Work and the Medium-term strategic plan would be complementary exercises, focused on monitoring the strategic objectives at a high level. Delegates’ comments, including the request for periodic reporting to the Health Assembly, would be taken into consideration in developing the monitoring process further.

The Committee noted the report.

3. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Malaria, including proposal for establishment of Malaria Day: Item 12.5 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R16, and A60/12)

Dr NYIKAL (Kenya), speaking at the request of the CHAIRMAN on behalf of the representative of the Executive Board, said that at its 120th session¹ the Board had welcomed WHO's efforts to coordinate global, regional and national malaria prevention and control activities by establishing the Global Malaria Programme, and strengthen the capacities of Member States to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate malaria control measures. WHO had been asked to continue its guidance on malaria control. The Board had supported the use of insecticides, including DDT, for indoor residual spraying, and expanded measures to monitor drug and insecticide resistance. The Board had noted that the cost of artemisinin combination therapies remained a major barrier to access to treatment and that counterfeit antimalarials were a problem in some countries.

The Board had adopted resolution EB120.R16, recommending a resolution to the Health Assembly. Two alternative texts were proposed for paragraph 1(5) of that draft resolution, which related to the application of the provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. The draft resolution called for the establishment of an international Malaria Day to increase public awareness and expand opportunities for advocacy.

Dr PARIRENYATWA (Zimbabwe), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, expressed appreciation for WHO's support to the African Union in developing the Africa Malaria Strategy. Each year malaria continued to kill more than one million people globally. In the African Region, malaria caused acute suffering, long-term disability and killed a child every 30 seconds. It resulted in missed school days, low productivity and massive economic loss. The knowledge and tools were available to combat malaria, but prevention and control efforts in the Region fell far short of what was required. Human and financial resources, the health systems, monitoring and evaluation capacity, and access to affordable diagnostic tools, vaccines, antimalarials and preventive technologies were all inadequate. Further obstacles included procurement and delivery systems, especially for medicines with a short shelf-life such as those used in artemisinin combination therapies. Increased access to paediatric formulations of artemisinin-based combination therapies and further research on new, effective and affordable antimalarial agents were needed.

At the African Summit on Roll Back Malaria (Abuja, 25 April 2000), African leaders had set new targets for malaria control. In 2006, they reaffirmed their commitment to halving the continent's malaria burden by 2010. The Regional Committee for Africa, at its fifty-sixth session, had recommended the intensification of cross-border initiatives, the integration of malaria control activities and public–private partnerships. He supported WHO's statement on the use of DDT for indoor residual spraying, and looked forward to publication of the related guidelines. Affected Member States should increase access to insecticides for indoor residual spraying and for insecticide-treated bednets.

He supported the draft resolution, endorsed the actions called for in paragraph 1, and preferred the first alternative text of paragraph 1(5). In paragraph 4, "Malaria Day" should be amended to "World Malaria Day" and the event should take place on 25 April each year.

Professor MWAKYUSA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his country aimed to halve mortality and morbidity from malaria by 2012. Recent achievements included the introduction of artemisinin-based combination therapies, establishment of a malaria epidemic database in 19 districts, a voucher scheme for subsidized bednets and the use of rapid diagnostic tests in peripheral health centres. Challenges included the overestimation of malaria cases, owing to the lack of laboratories and qualified personnel at health facilities, and meeting the high cost of artemisinin-based combination

¹ Document EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/2, summary record of the second meeting, section 3.

therapies. He thanked partners for support in acquiring artemisinin-based combination therapies, and he appealed to the manufacturers to reduce the number of tablets in an adult dose, a move that would improve compliance; paediatric formulations were also needed. He supported the draft resolution and the suggestion to establish a Malaria Day.

Professor KEVAU (Papua New Guinea) said that Papua New Guinea ranked third among the 10 countries of the Western Pacific Region for confirmed malaria cases. Artemisinin-combination therapy had been introduced in 2000 for severe malaria and treatment failure, but was currently being used as a first-line medicine. The emergence of counterfeit artemisinin was a concern, and a major infiltration into the current distribution system had recently been detected. He thanked WHO notably for securing support from key partners for the introduction of long-lasting impregnated bednets. He welcomed the inclusion of international organizations in the draft resolution.

He preferred the second alternative text of paragraph 1(5) of the draft resolution. Bearing in mind the importance of research, he suggested including in paragraph 3(1) the words “mobilization of resources and increased support for research in the development of new tools and strategies for prevention and control of malaria”.

Mr MARTIN (Switzerland) expressed broad agreement with the draft resolution. He welcomed the reference in paragraph 1(3) to the promotion of artemisinin-combination therapies. That paragraph should also include, in suitable wording, a reference to prohibiting the distribution, not merely the production, of counterfeit medicines, and a further reference to enforcement measures. He favoured the second alternative text of paragraph 1(5).

He agreed with the principle set out in paragraph 3(3) of bringing together the different stakeholders in the fight against malaria, but questioned whether it was necessary to create a special forum for that purpose. As existing mechanisms could serve the same purpose if given a wider mandate, he suggested adding the following sentence: “This forum could take advantage of similar meetings which take place in any case, such as the Global Forum for Health Research”. Whatever the wording chosen, such a forum should include the countries that had to implement prevention and control.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that, in spite of the current situation in his country, the number of cases of malaria had decreased from about 100 000 in 1995 to only 24 in 2006, the result of effective prevention and control measures. He urged WHO to support his country in eliminating malaria, ensuring prompt diagnosis and treatment, spraying and fogging activities, the distribution of bednets, vector surveillance, health education, and the incorporation of malaria prevention and control activities in primary health care. He supported the proposal for a Malaria Day.

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, emphasized the need to strengthen technical support for malaria control at country level, especially countries facing a heavy burden of disease or complex emergencies. He welcomed the request in the draft resolution to international organizations to support the capacity to expand interventions, such as case management with combination therapies, long-lasting insecticide-treated bednets and indoor residual spraying. There was still a huge shortfall to reaching 80% coverage by 2010 for those interventions in countries most affected.

The limited human capacity at country level, weak health systems, and a shortage of medicines, trained entomologists and vector control teams were all impeding progress in controlling malaria and other vector-borne diseases in endemic countries. It was therefore crucial to build resources for vector control at all levels. Several countries of the Region had made good progress in integrated vector management, but the range of insecticides at country level was limited. Several countries were embarking on malaria elimination at subregional, national or subnational level. He looked forward to support for malaria elimination from other partners, including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. WHO should continue to support capacity building by organizing training courses and by developing manuals and guidelines. The Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

had begun to document the successful experience of malaria elimination of countries such as Morocco, which could benefit countries in other regions. A Malaria Day would offer a good opportunity to raise stakeholder awareness, mobilize resources and scale up interventions against the disease. His delegation would be proposing certain amendments to the draft resolution.

Dr ASSOGBA (Benin) observed that, notwithstanding all the efforts and resources invested in malaria prevention and control by Benin and its international partners, malaria had yet to be eradicated. It remained a complex and major public health problem. In 2004, Benin had adopted a new, three-pronged malaria control policy consisting of: the use of artemisinin-combination therapies for uncomplicated malaria; intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancy; and integrated vector control based on long-lasting insecticide-treated bednets, indoor spraying and the use of larvicides. The new policy included door-to-door campaigns offering renewed treating of bednets. He wanted to see a world partnership to fight malaria, and firmly supported the proposal to establish a Malaria Day.

Mr CHAOUKI (Morocco) said that his country had made gigantic strides in the fight against malaria. No new case had been detected in 2006, suggesting that the disease had not progressed. The successes achieved were the result of vector control and the policy of monitoring travellers entering the country. Efforts to eliminate malaria were continuing in 2007. A new strategy for 2008–2012 would emphasize vector control, and target every other factor in the spread of malaria. WHO should assist countries endeavouring to halt the progress of the disease. It should also offer support for preventing the importation of malaria and the re-emergence of the disease in certain regions. WHO should formulate an integrated plan in order to combat all malaria vectors.

Professor FAIZ (Bangladesh) said that malaria was a major public health problem in 13 districts of his country, including three hill districts with relatively inaccessible terrain and populated mainly by ethnic minority groups; 80% of the cases were falciparum malaria. The national malaria control programme had been revised in 2004 in order to emphasize early diagnosis and effective treatment through artemisinin-combination therapies; integrated sector management; a strong information, education and communication component; and operational research. The objective of reducing malaria-specific mortality by 50% by 2010 was within reach. Assistance in sustaining the malaria control programme was essential. The observance of Malaria Day on 25 April would be a milestone for malaria control.

Successes in malaria research included the development of artesunate suppositories for use at community level in *non per os* cases of malaria, and the conclusive proof of the superiority of injection artesunate over quinine in adults with severe malaria. At peripheral level, where access to treatment of falciparum malaria before referral was very poor, the use of rectal artesunate could reduce mortality significantly.

Dr HAO Yang (China) welcomed the efforts of WHO to coordinate the work of international organizations and to create a partnership in the fight against malaria. He supported the establishment of a Malaria Day. However, 25 April would be an unwise choice of date for China and other countries in the region, where malaria occurred between May and the autumn months; moreover, in 1986 China had declared 25 April “child vaccination day”.

Ms PINTO FERNÁNDEZ (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her country’s strategy for combating malaria was based on early diagnosis and timely treatment. Successes of that strategy included the change-over to combined therapies as the first-line treatment for falciparum malaria; the use of impregnated bednets in endemic areas; and the inclusion of indigenous populations of miners in detection, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of malaria and other communicable diseases. Important recent innovations included artesunate and mefloquine-combination therapy, the establishment of new diagnostic centres, integrated vector control and the promotion of personal protection. Her Government recognized the importance of malaria control, and supported all pertinent initiatives in that respect.

She proposed that, in the third preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, the words “President of the United States of America” should be amended to “United States of America”. In paragraph 1(5), the words “whenever necessary” should be deleted, because that language could pose an obstacle to the flexibilities contained in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. She suggested 6 November as a suitable date for Malaria Day, that being the day on which Alphonse Laveran first observed the presence of malaria parasites in a patient’s blood. It was already the national Malaria Day in Guyana.

Mr DANKOKO (Senegal) said that his country had had about 1.5 million cases of malaria in 2006, accounting for about 34% of total morbidity. There had been no significant reduction in morbidity since 2000, despite the efforts of the authorities, which included the provision of insecticide-impregnated bednets at a greatly subsidized price, free intermittent preventive treatment for pregnant women, and artemisinin-based combination therapy for cases of uncomplicated malaria.

However, health service providers tended to classify all fevers automatically as malaria, which might be a partial explanation of the high morbidity rates. A new initiative for the accelerated reduction of morbidity from malaria aimed to improve case definition, rapid diagnostic testing, and the quality of the data collected, and to minimize the risk of errors in diagnosis and case notification. Hospital deaths from malaria had decreased markedly, from 37% of admissions in 2000 to 19% in 2006.

Because of increasing resistance to conventional antimalarial medicines, Senegal had switched to artemisinin derivatives in March 2006, which were currently widely available throughout the country. Equipment for rapid diagnostic testing would be supplied free to all clinicians. Insecticide-impregnated bednets had been distributed throughout the country, with the support of partners. In 2006, 45.6% of children under five years of age and 32.6% of pregnant women had possessed a bednet, compared with 1.7% of those groups in 2000. Bednets would be distributed free to vulnerable groups during immunization campaigns. A pilot project on indoor spraying with insecticides was under way in three districts. The results were expected in a year’s time, and would help in deciding whether to scale up the project.

He supported the draft resolution. World Malaria Day should be celebrated on 25 April.

Mr HERBERT (Saint Kitts and Nevis), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Caribbean Community, said that two previously non-endemic countries, the Bahamas and Jamaica, had recently experienced outbreaks of malaria, which had been rapidly contained, with no malaria-related deaths. With the support of PAHO and WHO, they had increased their laboratory capacity, mobilized resources for vector control, worked with the regional partners to minimize the impact of the outbreaks on the tourist trade, and procured significant amounts of antimalarial medicines. PAHO had also provided related support during the Cricket World Cup 2007.

All countries should assign adequate resources, both human and financial, to the fight against malaria. The movement of persons was expanding rapidly because of tourism and the creation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. He welcomed the proposal for an international Malaria Day, and suggested holding it on 6 November.

Mr SELWIG (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, said that the candidate countries Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova aligned themselves with his statement. He welcomed the increased commitments of the international community to fighting malaria. Endemic countries had been stepping up their malaria control programmes. The European Union supported country-led efforts based on effective case management with artemisinin-based combination therapy, prevention by means of insecticide-impregnated bednets, and other tailored vector control strategies.

He welcomed WHO’s strong support for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which allowed the temporary use of DDT for malaria vector control while calling for its

eventual replacement by other insecticides. He also supported WHO's recommendations for alternative measures for vector control, in a context of integrated vector management. He requested a more comprehensive overview of progress made by the Secretariat's task forces, the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group and the six working groups referred to in paragraph 13 of the report. He supported the draft resolution.

The problem of malaria involved issues of social and gender equality. Effective antimalarial medicines and impregnated bednets should be regarded as global public goods, access to which should involve a discussion about innovative forms of financing. It was important to develop local production and distribution of antimalarial medicines and impregnated bednets in developing countries. Pharmaceutical research, programme monitoring and continued evidence building through initiatives such as the Medicines for Malaria Venture and the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases would require cooperation and exchanges between countries and regions.

He supported the first alternative text for paragraph 1(5) of the draft resolution.

Dr MELNIKOVA (Russian Federation) said that malaria caused enormous human and economic losses. With tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, it placed a heavy burden on weak health systems. Many countries, particularly in Africa, did not have the national capacity to implement a malaria control strategy and experienced difficulties in establishing cross-border cooperation, or lacked financial resources and trained staff.

Recent years had seen considerable growth in the resources and strategies for funding devoted to malaria prevention and control. The Russian Federation was experienced in malaria control, in both the endemic and the post-eradication phases, with an adequate epidemiological monitoring system. It would contribute to the World Bank's malaria-control activities for the period 2007–2009 by financing laboratories in Africa, organizing management courses for bilateral malaria-control programmes, and providing technical assistance from Russian parasitologists and entomologists.

She supported the draft resolution, including the proposal for an international Malaria Day. WHO should improve the global surveillance system in order to identify regions where specific measures would be required, including the monitoring of migration, the status of risk factors for malaria and phenological forecasting. Scientific research institutes in the Russian Federation and other countries should collaborate with WHO in the development and production of rapid diagnostic test equipment, effective combinations of antimalarial medicines, and insecticides and larvicides with a low environmental impact. WHO should promote further research on the sensitivity of malarial plasmodia to antimalarial medicines and the sensitivity of the vector to synthetic pyrethroids that have been used in malaria-endemic areas for many years.

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) said that there was little general awareness of malaria as a global health problem. Her country was free of malaria, but there was still a risk of re-emergence or importation of the disease by migrants. The Government had therefore introduced a surveillance programme, emphasizing blood transfusion services, and all categories of health workers were trained to identify and treat malaria. She supported the draft resolution, including the proposal to establish a Malaria Day which should draw attention to both the health and economic aspects of the problem.

Mr NDONG NCHUCHUMA ESOMOYO (Equatorial Guinea) said that his country had established a malaria control programme which included vector control (more than 700 000 homes had been sprayed with residual insecticides since 2004) and the distribution of insecticide-impregnated bednets free to all children under the age of five and pregnant women attending prenatal clinics. Artemisinin-based combination therapy had been introduced.

On the island of Bioko, all children under the age of 15 years received free antimalarial treatment at public health centres, and pregnant women received free intermittent preventive therapy from the second trimester of pregnancy. On 25 April 2007, Africa Malaria Day had drawn attention to the recommended prevention and control measures. He expressed his appreciation to partners, including the private sector, and supported the draft resolution.

Dr OPART KARNKAWINPONG (Thailand) said that malaria control in his country took the form of integrated programmes in low-endemic areas and vertical programmes in high-endemic areas. He supported the strategic directions identified in the Global Malaria Programme, and thanked WHO for its support in the development of artemisinin-based combination therapies for use along the border between Thailand and Cambodia. The mefloquine-artesunate combination had been in use along the border since 1995 and in the rest of the country since 2005. Surveillance for antimalarial drug resistance had been conducted in nine border provinces for over 10 years, using both in vivo and in vitro methods: resistance had been detected in only one of the surveillance areas.

Antimalarial medicines were licensed for use only in public health facilities, although private hospitals could use them with the permission of the Ministry of Public Health. Public awareness campaigns were conducted in May every year, just before the peak season for malaria in Thailand. He expressed concern about the use of DDT for indoor residual spraying, mentioned in paragraph 2(1) of the draft resolution. The cost-effectiveness of DDT was still in question because of its environmental impact, and its use was banned in Thailand.

He supported the draft resolution, with the following amendments. In paragraph 2(1), the text should be amended to read: "... spraying with appropriate, safe and environmentally nonpersistent insecticides ...". A new paragraph 2(3) bis should be added, to read: "to continue an ongoing support mechanism, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, to obtain information on the use of DDT and other evidence in order to evaluate the continued need of DDT use for vector control".

Dr CHITUWO (Zambia) said that malaria was a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in tropical areas. Many proven interventions were out of reach for poor countries, including insecticide-impregnated bednets, indoor residual spraying, artemisinin-based combination therapy and intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancy. Health systems needed to be strengthened in areas with high resistance to conventional antimalarial medicines before those methods could be introduced. Ill-health was the main threat to development, growth and equity in sub-Saharan Africa. Greater investment was needed in research on a malaria vaccine and in human resources at all levels.

Partnerships were essential to the success of malaria control programmes, and should draw on the relative strengths of each partner. He paid tribute to his own country's partners in malaria control, and he looked forward to cooperation with new partners, such as the Malaria Initiative. Zambia's partners observed the "Three Ones" principle: one national plan, developed by one national authority, with one agreed system of monitoring and evaluation. Under Zambia's malaria control programme a total of 300 000 pregnant women had received intermittent preventive therapy; ownership of insecticide-impregnated bednets had increased from 14% to 50%; and coverage with indoor residual spraying had increased by 46%. Mortality from malaria had fallen by 16% and the overall incidence of the disease had decreased by 10% between 2003 and 2005.

World Malaria Day should be celebrated on 25 April, although Member States in the Southern African Development Community celebrated an additional malaria day of their own in November every year.

He warned of the potential impact of climate change on the incidence of malaria. Areas that were not currently capable of supporting the *Anopheles* mosquito might easily become so in the future.

Mr MENESES (Mexico) said that in his country transmission of malaria had been reduced, and the number of malaria cases was at its lowest ever. Some 80% of cases caused by *Plasmodium vivax* occurred in small endemic areas on the border with Central America. Most of the few cases of falciparum malaria had been imported from Central America and had been quickly detected and treated, thanks to nationwide epidemiological surveillance.

Since 1999, Mexico's malaria programme had focused on the elimination of vectors, plasmodia in humans and mosquito-breeding sites. The information system was able to identify risk factors and types of malaria, and to implement targeted use of medicines and other antimalarial measures, excluding spraying with DDT.

He supported the draft resolution. However, the declaration of a World Malaria Day would not solve the problem of the high incidence of malaria in some countries and regions. He proposed the day should be celebrated on 16 November, or alternatively that each country should choose its own appropriate date.

Professor TLOU (Botswana) observed that malaria was a major public health problem in Botswana; the unstable and highly seasonal transmission of malaria meant that acquired immunity to malaria was negligible and all age groups were at risk of severe forms of the disease. Antimalarial medicines policy had changed to artemisinin-based combination therapies. Local production of insecticide-treated bednets and lower prices had increased their availability and uptake.

Botswana's national malaria control programme had been evaluated in 2005, following which a five-year strategic plan had been devised. The national malaria indicator survey would assess progress towards the targets set out in the Abuja Declaration on Roll Back Malaria in Africa (2000). She thanked her country's partners, including WHO, for their support in the Roll Back Malaria initiative, and supported the draft resolution.

Dr YOSHIDA (Japan) said that by the end of 2007 his Government would donate a further 10 million insecticide-treated bednets to African countries, in addition to the eight million already provided.

Japan had once been endemic for malaria. The risk of re-emergence was well recognized, particularly through importation. He supported the basic provisions contained in the draft resolution, but was concerned at the strengthening of WHO's technical support for indoor residual spraying with DDT. The Organization should establish a system for monitoring such interventions that took into account the sustainability of using DDT, which was a persistent organic pollutant regulated by the Stockholm Convention, and the possible emergence of resistant mosquitoes. A system for monitoring residual DDT should also be established jointly with the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention, in order to minimize the economic damage to other sectors, such as agriculture.

He supported the second option for paragraph 1(5) of the draft resolution.

Dr STEIGER (United States of America) observed that the Malaria Initiative of his President provided evidence of his country's recognition of the importance of global malaria control. The White House Summit on Malaria (Washington DC, 14 December 2006) had united stakeholders who had called on wealthier countries to increase their funding for malaria control. He supported the proposal in the draft resolution to declare 25 April World Malaria Day. Such a measure, however, would not reduce the global burden of the disease. Renewed focus was required on the malaria control interventions outlined in the report, particularly in affected Member States.

He appreciated the clear statements made by the head of the Global Malaria Programme in favour of using DDT for indoor residual spraying. However, other members of the Secretariat appeared to have contradicted that position in recent weeks. The Director-General should issue a statement on the use of DDT in malaria control programmes. The Malaria Initiative was financing the use of DDT and other safe insecticides in carefully controlled household-spraying campaigns, with the full support of the host governments in the target countries.

The Director-General should also reaffirm the importance of quality standards for antimalarial medicines, and the need to conduct robust campaigns against counterfeiting. In their work and public statements, Secretariat staff should support the procurement policy set by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for the purchase of antimalarial medicine with Global Fund financing.

He urged donors to match his President's specific multiyear financial commitments to malaria control. Affected countries, particularly in Africa, should increase spending in order to meet the targets set out in the Abuja Declaration on Roll Back Malaria in Africa (2000). They should also eliminate all taxes and tariffs on imported medicines and bednets.

Turning to the draft resolution, he supported the second option for paragraph 1(5) and the wording in parentheses in paragraph 1(6).

Dr NYIKAL (Kenya) observed that in Kenya malaria caused more deaths than HIV/AIDS. Costly malaria control strategies had been effective, but would be unsustainable without continued support from partners. He thanked the various partners for having facilitated numerous interventions, including indoor residual spraying and artemisinin-combination therapies. The focus should be on improving access to technologies and commodities for malaria diagnosis, prevention and treatment. In the draft resolution, Kenya supported the second option for paragraph 1(5), because it accurately reflected the Board's decision. He also supported the choice of 25 April for World Malaria Day.

Dr DE ASSUNÇÃO CARVALHO (Sao Tome and Principe) said that his country had introduced artemisinin-combination therapies, intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancy with sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine, free distribution of insecticide-treated bednets to pregnant women and children under 10, and indoor residual spraying. Those measures had resulted in fewer malaria patients being admitted to hospital, from 9258 per 100 000 in 2004 to 1300 per 100 000 in 2006. Malaria currently accounted for 3% of deaths in his country. Sustaining the plan at its current level would, however, prove difficult.

He thanked partners for their support to combat malaria. In general, awareness about the disease was still low despite increased funding for malaria control. He endorsed holding World Malaria Day on 25 April and the other provisions in the draft resolution.

Mr WATERBERG (Suriname) said that between 2000 and 2006 the number of malaria cases in Suriname had been reduced by 70%. Measures introduced included a rapid diagnostic test and artemether-combination therapy in 2004, and were made possible through strong cooperation between national and interagency stakeholders and with support from partners including PAHO's Amazonian Network for Surveillance of Antimalarial Drug Resistance. Continued collaboration with its partners would assist Suriname to eliminate malaria by 2015. The results had improved the health of the population, particularly pregnant women and children, and encouraged the socioeconomic development of endemic areas.

He supported the draft resolution and would welcome the establishment of World Malaria Day on 6 November in the Region of the Americas.

Dr KANDUN (Indonesia) said that about half the population of Indonesia was living in malaria-endemic areas, covering 70% of the country. There had been a significant decrease in the number of cases in the west of the country, but the disease was still widespread in the east, mainly because of poor access to health services. Growing resistance to some existing treatments had led to the introduction of new types, including artemisinin-combination therapies. Although efforts were being made to ensure comprehensive coverage of interventions through better targeting, limited resources were hindering progress. Current donor support had been directed towards combating malaria in the east of the country.

Given the low level of awareness about malaria in Indonesia, greater visibility should be given to the malaria programme as well as to political support. He therefore supported the proposal for 25 April to be declared World Malaria Day.

Dr LAL (India) said that in India malaria was particularly debilitating in young children and pregnant women. About 90% of the population lived in malaria-endemic areas, but 80% of cases were confined to only 20% of the population. The Government had launched, in 2005, the national rural health mission in order to improve the availability of, and access to, health care, for those living in rural areas, the poor, women and children. It was also implementing a national vector-borne disease control programme. Malaria control activities were being implemented by provincial governments through the primary health care system. They included: disease management; integrated vector management for transmission risk reduction, including indoor residual spraying in selected high-risk areas, distribution of insecticide-treated bednets, and use of larvivorous fish and other anti-larval measures; and other interventions, such as efforts to change behaviour, public-private partnerships, intersectoral convergence and capacity building. After the early 1970s, there had been a countrywide

resurgence of malaria which, as a result of the Government's efforts, had been contained below two million cases.

Drug resistance was being monitored and medicines policy revised periodically. Where resistance to chloroquine had developed, artemisinin, in combination with sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine, was being used. Under the revised medicines policy, primary health centres clustered around areas where chloroquine resistance had been reported would shift to second-line treatment. The efficacy of sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine was being monitored and, in case of resistance, treatment would be changed. Rapid diagnostic tests were also being extended, and the use of treated bednets and indoor residual spraying in high-risk areas promoted.

In India, transmission generally started during the monsoon. An antimalaria month in June every year sought to create an environment for its prevention and control through advocacy, intersectoral meetings, media and interpersonal communication. A World Malaria Day would mobilize the international community and national governments to step up prevention and control. However, Member States should be free to decide the date in accordance with the transmission season. India had therefore chosen 1 June as Malaria Day. He supported the draft resolution.

Mr MABUZA (Swaziland) said that malaria remained a major public health problem for his country, where about one third of the population was at risk. The objective was to reduce the burden of disease to a level where it ceased to threaten economic development. An estimated 90% of recurrent expenditure on malaria control came from the Government, attesting to its commitment, and the remaining 10% from partners.

Swaziland had been steadily reducing malaria-related mortality and morbidity, and funding had been received from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in order to scale up vector control and strengthen capacity for epidemic preparedness and response. As a result of that funding, his Government's commitment and collaboration with neighbouring countries, mortality and morbidity due to malaria had been reduced by more than 70% in the past five years, with parasite prevalence falling from 2% in 2000 to 0.02% in 2006. He welcomed continued support from the Global Fund and other partners. The current challenge would be to sustain those achievements in the prevailing economic and social climate. Swaziland would continue to observe 25 April as its national malaria day.

Dr FIKRI (United Arab Emirates) said that, following intense efforts over more than three decades, his country had been declared free of malaria by WHO early in 2007. That experience could serve as a model for other countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. In 1977, his country had devised a strategy for combating the disease. Once the spread of the disease had been halted in 1998, a national programme, approved by WHO, had been developed for the post-certification period. He thanked WHO for its assistance. He supported the draft resolution and agreed that Malaria Day should be commemorated on 25 April.

Dr MESSELE (Ethiopia) said that malaria was a major health concern in her country and tackling it was an important component of the health extension programme. Prevention and control were being stepped up, including use of insecticide-treated bednets and early diagnosis and treatment. Of the 20 million insecticide-treated bednets due to be distributed by August 2007, 15.8 million had already been handed out.

Increasing prevalence of drug resistance required close monitoring of national treatment policy. Indoor residual spraying was more extensive and social mobilization helped to accelerate the prevention and control programme. She endorsed the draft resolution.

Dr WANGCHUK (Bhutan) said that the attainment of the Millennium Development Goal relating to malaria was proving difficult for several Member States in the South-East Asia Region due to the persistent high burden of disease. He welcomed the involvement of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and other partners, and WHO's coordination work through the

Global Malaria Programme. He agreed that Malaria Day should be commemorated annually on 25 April, and supported the draft resolution.

Dr MUSTAFA (Sudan) supported the draft resolution and suggested the addition of a new paragraph 2(3), to read: “to support research and development for new drugs and vaccines”.

Dr JALLOW (Gambia) said that malaria was a major killer of children under five years of age in Gambia, and was responsible for more than 50% of outpatient visits. Malaria control strategies applied in her country included: vector control, with selective larviciding; use of insecticide-treated bednets and their free distribution to children under five, pregnant women and vulnerable groups; effective and prompt case management, with artemisinin-based combination therapies to be introduced later in 2007; and global partnerships (including the private sector). Community structures disseminated information on malaria, and the Government had removed taxes and tariffs on insecticide-treated bednets and other malaria control items. It was also planning to introduce indoor residual spraying, working closely with the WHO country office.

Mr KAZIHISE (Burundi) said that malaria was the leading public health problem in Burundi. More than half the population was at risk and a quarter lived in hyperendemic areas. Malaria accounted for half all consultations at health-care facilities. More than two million cases were recorded annually, of which 40% were in children under five years of age; 48% of deaths in that age group were attributable to malaria. Thanks to control measures, malaria had declined in recent years, following a peak of more than three million cases during a widespread epidemic in 2001. Artemisinin-combination therapies had been used since the end of 2003. Health care, including treatment for uncomplicated malaria, had been free for children under five years of age since May 2006 and was heavily subsidized for other age groups: 78% of patients received treatment that conformed to national guidelines. Laboratory equipment was available in 80% of health-care facilities. Still, coverage with insecticide-treated bednets remained low despite considerable efforts. Coverage of 95% for indoor residual spraying in one region of the country had prevented malaria outbreaks there.

After a decade of political instability, poverty was widespread and health needs were in competition with other basic needs. Burundi was grateful for the support for malaria control provided by many partners.

Dr KAMWI (Namibia) emphasized prompt diagnosis and treatment of malaria, and the adoption of WHO recommendations on the use of artemisinin-combination therapies. Namibia supported the designation of 25 April as World Malaria Day. The uninterrupted use of DDT for indoor residual spraying as a vector control measure in Namibia had led to a remarkable reduction in mosquito density and to the virtual elimination of *Anopheles funestus*. It was therefore of concern that a statement made by a WHO official on such use conflicted with the statement issued previously. The Director-General was requested to issue a formal statement on the matter based on scientific results. He supported the draft resolution.

Mr MOONASAR (South Africa) supported the first option for paragraph 1(5) of the draft resolution and the use of DDT for indoor residual spraying for vector control, which had proved successful when used safely and responsibly. The substantial reduction in malaria cases in the areas covered by indoor DDT residual spraying programmes undertaken in border areas in cooperation with Swaziland and Mozambique had led to the hope that malaria could be eliminated. Such programmes should therefore be expanded in accordance with WHO guidelines. South Africa supported the designation of World Malaria Day and endorsed the need for flexibility in the application of malaria prevention and control measures to take into account different epidemiological and geographical settings.

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region wished to propose some amendments to the draft resolution before the Committee, including two substantive ones. In paragraph 1(3), the request that Member States should cease provision of oral artemisinin monotherapies should be extended to “financing bodies”. In paragraph 3(3) the list of partners should be deleted and replaced with the words “different stakeholders”.

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the delegate of Madagascar, said that his country had had successes in its fight against malaria. The small island of Sainte-Marie to the north-east was serving as a pilot site, and had reported no case of malaria since October 2006, because insecticide-treated bednets had been distributed to the 18 000 inhabitants, thanks to WHO and other partners. The disease might already have been eliminated on that island. His Government had made a firm commitment to eradicate malaria from the main island by 2012, by following the recommendations issued by the Regional Office for Africa and headquarters.

Dr NAKATANI (Assistant Director-General) welcomed the useful suggestions for strengthening and maintaining effective measures against counterfeit medicines. He had noted the comments concerning research activities, vector control measures (including indoor residual spraying, monitoring and surveillance), malaria days, and the promotion of better coordination among donors. He also appreciated the continued support expressed by donor communities and by potential new donors such as China and the Russian Federation.

He apologized for the confusion regarding the documentation and suggested the production of one consolidated, amended draft resolution.

Dr NEIRA (Department of Protection of the Human Environment) clarified the statement on the use of DDT made by the WHO delegation at the third meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Dakar, 30 April–4 May 2007). There was no difference in position concerning DDT use between the environmental health team and the malaria group in WHO. The position adopted at the Conference had been balanced: WHO was trying to fight malaria while attempting to reduce reliance on the use of persistent organic pollutants. Malaria control was a priority for WHO, and therefore the use of DDT in certain circumstances, particularly in some African countries for indoor residual spraying, might be indicated. Such use should be in accordance with WHO guidelines and the terms of the Stockholm Convention and always in the context of integrated vector management. Even though, in certain regions like Latin America, the phasing out of DDT was a reality, DDT was still required in some African countries for integrated vector management. The Secretariat would work with Member States in order to ensure that DDT was used in accordance with WHO guidelines and the requirements of the Stockholm Convention.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that a revised version of the draft resolution, incorporating the proposed amendments, should be prepared for consideration by the Committee at a later stage.

It was so agreed.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the tenth meeting, section 2.)

The meeting rose at 12:35.

SIXTH MEETING

Thursday, 17 May 2007, at 14:40

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning: Item 12.6 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R3, and A60/13)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R3.

Dr ANTEZANA ARANÍBAR (representative of the Executive Board), introducing the item, said that the Board had examined the draft resolution on tuberculosis control at its 120th session in January 2007. The Stop TB strategy and the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015, which were intended as a framework for achieving the internationally agreed tuberculosis control targets and the tuberculosis-related Millennium Development Goal, had received considerable support. The Board had adopted resolution EB120.R3, which recommended a draft resolution to the Health Assembly.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) described tuberculosis as a public health emergency in Iraq, with an estimated prevalence of 200 cases per 100 000 population, following substantial increases in the 1990s and a worsening situation after the war in 2003. All health services had been badly affected but access to tuberculosis care in particular had been seriously restricted, especially among vulnerable population groups. Consequently, the overall case notification rate and the detection rate for sputum smear-positive pulmonary tuberculosis were only 28% and 20% respectively. Based on the figures for 2004, around 37 000 people developed tuberculosis every year and some 8000 died from the disease, but those estimates needed verification. In 2005, a total of 9454 cases had been detected in Iraq, including 6751 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis, of which 3096 were smear-positive, 2887 were smear-negative and 768 were relapses. About 80% of cases occurred in the 15 to 54 year age group, with significant social and development consequences for the country.

Directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS) had been introduced in 1998 and subsequently extended to all governorates. The national objectives were to ensure high-quality DOTS activities; to expand the national DOTS strategy to all districts; to expand access to care for vulnerable population groups; and to improve management capacity. The strategy could be enhanced by improving case detection, standardizing treatment – with supervision and patient support – ensuring effective supplies of medicine, monitoring and evaluation at all primary health care centres, and increasing public awareness of the disease. The strategy would need significant support in order to reach the case-detection rate target of 70%. Active involvement of the private sector and nongovernmental organizations, in addition to community participation in disease detection and control, was of great importance in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that the report on achieving the internationally agreed tuberculosis-control targets for 2005 provided a platform for long-term planning to achieve the 2015 targets. The figures in the report demonstrated the need for full implementation of the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015 and the Stop TB strategy.

He supported the draft resolution. Tuberculosis in his Region was the leading cause of adult deaths from communicable diseases. Tuberculosis care based on the DOTS approach had achieved 95% coverage and a treatment success rate of 83%. Over five years one million patients had received tuberculosis care. However, the case detection rate was still low (44% in 2005) and only five countries had achieved the global targets for tuberculosis control. There remained an estimated 300 000 undetected cases across the Region.

Countries needed to expand tuberculosis care and widen application of global tuberculosis initiatives, with improved laboratory services and quality of DOTS activities. All health-care providers should be involved and civil society empowered. He emphasized political commitment and sustainable financing for tuberculosis control. His Region had taken steps towards establishing the Eastern Mediterranean Partnership to Stop TB in order to promote international cooperation and provide technical and financial support. He stressed the need to estimate the tuberculosis burden accurately, given the concern that the incidence of the disease was being overestimated in some countries in the Region. He requested the Secretariat to develop specific tools for that purpose.

Dr LAL (India), noting that 1.8 million people developed tuberculosis and 370 000 died from the disease in India every year, said that the emergence of HIV-tuberculosis coinfection and multidrug-resistant strains had increased the severity and magnitude of the tuberculosis epidemic. India's revised national tuberculosis programme, based on the DOTS approach, had resulted in the fastest expansion of DOTS services in the world. Since 1997, the programme had initiated treatment for more than 6.8 million patients, thereby saving at least 1.2 million additional lives. The treatment success rate for new sputum smear-positive cases remained above 85% and the case detection rate was close to 70%. The programme included most of the components of the Stop TB strategy, with the aim of achieving the tuberculosis-related Millennium Development Goal by 2015.

He supported the draft resolution. Tuberculosis control was a long-term activity, and the current global goal was to ensure that the disease was no longer a public health problem by 2050. Tuberculosis control programmes therefore required financial stability. Long-term donor assistance was vital for the sustainability of such programmes. Government funding was not a substitute for international donor assistance but an additional resource.

Basic DOTS activities must be offered in devising treatment programmes for drug-resistant tuberculosis. Well-implemented DOTS programmes prevented multidrug resistance. Extremely drug-resistant tuberculosis could be prevented by the rational use of second-line medicines, in accordance with national and international guidelines.

In India, unlike elsewhere, the prevalence of HIV among tuberculosis patients was only 2% to 5%. With seven million suspected cases of tuberculosis evaluated annually through the primary health-care infrastructure, the policy was not to refer all for HIV testing. Evidence was collected by the national tuberculosis programme in order to evaluate HIV prevalence among tuberculosis patients.

Effective tuberculosis-control programmes required sustainable long-term investment, laboratory capacity for smear microscopy, implementation of external quality assurance and increased capacity for culture and drug susceptibility testing.

Dr OUAHDI (Algeria) said that multidrug-resistant and extremely drug-resistant tuberculosis required additional international research into anti-tuberculosis agents that should be used exclusively for treating tuberculosis. There was a risk that the prevalence of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis might increase if the DOTS approach was not followed correctly, but DOTS programmes could only be applied if there were affordable health facilities and laboratory capacity for populations at risk. Access for tuberculosis patients to community health services would reduce tuberculosis morbidity and mortality with fewer patients cutting short their treatment.

Dr MBOWE (Gambia) reported significant progress in tuberculosis control in his country, with a case notification rate for new sputum smear-positive cases of 66.7% and a treatment success rate of 86% in 2006. The defaulter rate had fallen to 1%, compared with 14% in 2003. Progress was partly due to innovations such as integrating tuberculosis services into the existing primary health-care

system; providing incentives for health-care workers; providing “enabler packages”, including refunds for food and transport, to tuberculosis patients; and building community awareness.

Gambia had developed both short-term and long-term plans for tuberculosis control, on the basis of the goal of ensuring that the disease was no longer a public health problem. He thanked WHO and other partners for financial and technical support. He supported the draft resolution.

Mr ECKENDORF (Germany) spoke on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States. The candidate countries Croatia, Turkey and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, and the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova aligned themselves with his statement. He strongly endorsed WHO’s efforts to control tuberculosis through the Stop TB Strategy and the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015. The European Union’s surveillance systems must continue to collaborate with WHO. Although he welcomed the stabilization in the global annual incidence of tuberculosis, he expressed concern at the situation in eastern Europe, the Russian Federation and Central Asia where 14 000 new cases had been registered in 2005 among HIV patients; co-infection posed significant challenges in terms of treatment and care. The development of appropriate medicines for the 900 000 tuberculosis-infected children in those areas also lagged behind. Multidrug resistance was seen in 15% of tuberculosis cases in those areas, a proportion three times higher than in the rest of the world, and access to appropriate treatment was limited. The European Region showed the lowest disease-detection rates and the highest level of resistance to treatment.

Cross-border and regional cooperation among countries with different epidemiological situations and different standards of tuberculosis control should be enhanced through health surveillance for workers from countries with a high incidence of tuberculosis, and through regional discussions. A ministerial forum on tuberculosis, organized by the Regional Office for Europe, would be held in Berlin in October 2007.

Strengthening equitable national health systems was essential; resistance to antituberculosis medicines increased when tuberculosis care was poorly managed. The European Union had helped to stabilize tuberculosis incidence rates through its continuing contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and to WHO and through bilateral support to endemic countries. It was important to assure the financing of first-line medicines and the creation of emergency stockpiles where necessary.

Better diagnostics and external quality control of laboratory diagnosis enhanced control of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis. New medicines were needed, and he welcomed the voluntary, innovative financing initiatives taken by groups of Member States, in particular the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID). All Member States should increase research funding and WHO should lead in promoting global tuberculosis research.

Increased coordination and collaboration with other programmes was needed, especially those on HIV/AIDS.

He supported the draft resolution, but proposed a new additional subparagraph at the end of the preamble that would read: “Welcoming the contribution to the mobilization of resources for development by voluntary innovative financing initiatives taken by groups of Member States and in this regard noting the International Drug Purchase Facility – UNITAID, the International Finance Facility for Immunisation, and the commitment to launch a pilot project within the Advance Market Commitments initiatives”.

Dr HAO Yang (China), commending the Secretariat’s support to Member States in controlling tuberculosis, noted that, although all WHO regions had made progress, the targets for 2005 had not been met and control efforts varied considerably from country to country. The expansion of the DOTS strategy in many countries meant that more attention should go to the quality of DOTS programmes. Member States should strive to achieve the Millennium Development Goal targets by devising medium-term and long-term plans. WHO should establish an effective funding mechanism for tuberculosis control. Since increased multidrug resistance was a major obstacle to tuberculosis control,

the Secretariat should support Member States in developing their laboratory capacity in order to provide for rapid drug-susceptibility testing and greater access to more reliable second-line medicines. Finally, it should strengthen research into new diagnostic methods, vaccines and medicines.

Mr DANKOKO (Senegal), commending the report, said that the incidence of tuberculosis in his country was 110 per 100 000 inhabitants, and in 2006 its national tuberculosis control programme had reported 6882 new sputum smear-positive cases and more than 10 500 cases, of all forms of tuberculosis, making the case-detection rate 55%. The incidence of tuberculosis among HIV-infected people in two urban centres, including Dakar, had been estimated at about 15% in 2004. A multidrug-resistance study, begun in 2005 with WHO support, had revealed a primary resistance rate of 1.9%. A four-year plan for tuberculosis control (2002–2006) had strengthened DOTS programmes and raised the treatment success rate from 53% in 2001 to 70% in 2007; it had also built up the capacity of medical, nursing and laboratory staff and furthered community-based interventions. Commitment to tuberculosis control was demonstrated by a substantially increased budget allocation to antituberculosis medicines. Despite its efforts, however, Senegal was still far from achieving the targets it had set for 2015.

He supported the draft resolution, and urged financial partners to increase their support for national tuberculosis control programmes.

Mr KIFLEYESUS (Eritrea) said that rational use of combination therapy had good treatment outcomes. Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and adverse reactions needed robust systems of drug regulation, including quality assurance and control for laboratories, an essential requirement. The Secretariat should assist Member States in establishing those systems for tuberculosis laboratories and pharmacovigilance centres, both national and regional, for the purpose of monitoring multidrug-induced adverse reactions. He urged Member States to promote community involvement in DOTS programmes.

He supported the draft resolution.

Dr OPART KARNKAWINPONG (Thailand) noted that, despite considerable progress in scaling up the DOTS strategy, the global targets for 2005 had not been reached. In addition, the problems of tuberculosis/HIV coinfection and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis needed to be solved. Thailand fully supported the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015 and the Stop TB strategy. The funding gap of US\$ 31 000 million for the 10-year period 2006–2015 was a major impediment to achieving the targets. WHO should work with international donors in order to close that gap. WHO's initiatives to control HIV-related tuberculosis and to overcome multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis by establishing the Global HIV Drug Resistance Surveillance Network had not been successful since few Member States participated in the Network. There had been no consensus on standard guidelines for rapid drug-susceptibility testing, and such testing methods were expensive to initiate and maintain.

He proposed several amendments to the draft resolution. He suggested the addition of new text after the seventh preambular subparagraph, that would read: "Recognizing the importance of situations and trends of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis in contributing to the achievement of the Global Plan by 2015, and the need for an increased number of Member States participating in the Network and the required additional resources in accomplishing its task;". He proposed inserting in paragraph 1(e), after "from all persons with culture-positive tuberculosis," the words "where resources are available"; the addition of a new subparagraph, after paragraph 2(1), that would read: "to continue to support the Global Drug Resistance Surveillance Network by increasing the number of Member States in the Network in order to establish the trends and situations of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis to inform the Global Plan to Stop TB"; and insertion at the end of paragraph 2(5) of text reading "including the development of consensus guidelines for rapid drug-susceptibility test methods, mobilization of funding and appropriate techniques for laboratory strengthening".

Professor TLOU (Botswana) commended the priority accorded by WHO to tuberculosis control. Botswana's notification rates for tuberculosis had risen sharply since the 1990s, and its case-detection and treatment-success rates had reached 87% and 67%, respectively, in 2005. The rate of coinfection with HIV among tuberculosis patients was 60% to 80%. The incidence of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis was low but increasing. A survey was under way to detect the existence of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis. A five-year strategic plan was being elaborated in line with the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015. The DOTS strategy had been introduced in Botswana in 1986 and was being expanded; 14 of the 24 health districts were implementing community tuberculosis care.

She thanked WHO and other partners for technical and financial support. She urged WHO to increase its support for countries affected by extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis and to assist them in building their research capacity in that area. She supported the draft resolution.

Mr VAN OMMEN (Netherlands) proposed amending paragraphs 1(1)(a) and 2(4) of the draft resolution to include the wording "with specific attention to vulnerable groups highly at risk, such as the poor, migrants and ethnic minorities".

Professor KEVAU (Papua New Guinea) said that the rapid expansion of the tuberculosis epidemic in Papua New Guinea was due to weak health services, coexistence with HIV, and the possible emergence of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. Papua New Guinea ranked third in the Western Pacific Region in terms of incidence, prevalence and mortality, and eighth for the estimated number of cases. The latter were probably underreported as the case-detection rate was only 20%. Both the incidence and the mortality rates were expected to rise sharply as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Greater support for diagnostic capabilities with high sensitivity and specificity was needed, especially for extrapulmonary tuberculosis. He acknowledged WHO's support. His Government had implemented many of the strategies advocated in tuberculosis plans, including the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015. He supported the draft resolution.

Professor FAIZ (Bangladesh) said that Bangladesh ranked fifth among the countries with high burdens of tuberculosis. Through the rapid expansion of the DOTS strategy, the rates of case detection and successful treatment were 71% and 91% respectively. The tuberculosis control programme collaborated with nongovernmental organizations with funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The areas identified for improvement included: case detection and treatment; supervision; monitoring and evaluating through the 28 quality assurance centres; and drug resistance, the prevalence of which was only 2%. Innovative management strategies were being implemented, for example in the workplace. He broadly supported the report but was concerned about the diagnosis and management of extrapulmonary tuberculosis.

Mr MABUZA (Swaziland), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, expressed support for the draft resolution. The report highlighted the challenges facing African countries, many of which had fallen short of the case-detection and care-rate targets for global tuberculosis control because of many other pressing calls on limited resources. The tuberculosis burden was compounded by the high rates of HIV infection and AIDS. Africa was the only continent with a steadily rising number of tuberculosis cases – 4% annually. The seriousness of the situation had been openly acknowledged by the WHO Regional Committee for Africa at its fifty-fifth session (Maputo, 22–26 August 2005). Subsequently, most countries in the Region had intensified their bid to control tuberculosis. The challenges facing them included weak health systems and a continuing lack of financial and human resources. In order to achieve the targets, African countries would need to improve the quality of tuberculosis treatment and care services, including the DOTS approach, and strengthen the capacity of laboratory services. Poverty was also a factor driving the epidemic; tuberculosis must be a priority in strategies to reduce poverty. Multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant cases, which had so far only been reported in South Africa, presented a new and additional problem. WHO should provide countries with the necessary support and guidance in order to prevent it spreading. He urged the Director-General to mobilize the resources necessary for the

containment and management of the disease, particularly in countries with high HIV prevalence. African countries would also need to scale up their collaboration for tuberculosis and HIV. Tuberculosis should be included in the development agenda of the G8 group of countries in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The Stop TB Partnership should assist countries in achieving the targets set out in the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015.

He proposed that the draft resolution should be amended by inclusion of the following: emphasis on the linkages between HIV/AIDS activities and tuberculosis initiatives; wording in the first preambular paragraph to the effect that Member States should include the private sector in national tuberculosis control programmes; and, in paragraph 2, mention of the need to strengthen urgently the Secretariat's support to Member States affected by multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis.

Mr SAMO (Federated States of Micronesia) said that the report's conclusion that the Western Pacific Region had surpassed the global targets for tuberculosis control should be viewed with circumspection. Small island States tended to be overshadowed by their larger neighbours. His country had made progress in tackling tuberculosis, but geographical considerations and limited resources had made it difficult to reach the entire population. Technical and financial support was needed from WHO and partners in order to successfully control tuberculosis. He supported the draft resolution, but proposed that paragraph 1(1)(c) be amended by replacing "limiting" with "controlling".

Dr BUSUTTIL (Malta) said that his country had adopted the DOTS strategy and achieved a treatment success rate of 100%. The rates of incidence, including all forms of tuberculosis, prevalence and mortality, as well as of new-case detection, for 2005 reflected well on Malta's tuberculosis programme. Regrettably, there had been two cases of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in 2007. Since 2002 Malta had experienced an increasing influx of illegal immigrants, mainly from countries with a high prevalence of tuberculosis. In 2005, 65% of tuberculosis cases in Malta had been imported. Many immigrants were also suffering from HIV, which could adversely affect tuberculosis incidence in the future. Those aspects should therefore be given high priority. Malta provided free access to health care and tuberculosis treatment for all patients. His Government supported the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015, including the expansion of interventions against multidrug-resistant and HIV-related tuberculosis.

Dr NYIKAL (Kenya) proposed that the draft resolution should be amended to include an additional subparagraph under paragraph 1(1) to read "accelerating HIV/tuberculosis collaborative interventions".

Dr SUGIURA (Japan) asked for clarification of the term "health-information systems" in paragraph 1(1)(b). Paragraph 1(1)(c) contained references to multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and the DOTS strategy, both of which were important enough to warrant individual subparagraphs. One should read: "reaffirming high-quality implementation of the DOTS strategy by tuberculosis programmes as the first and foremost step in full implementation of the Stop TB strategy"; and the second: "limiting the emergence and transmission of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, including extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis, by ensuring the DOTS strategy and by prompt implementation of infection-control precautions". He supported the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015.

Dr KABELA (Democratic Republic of the Congo) supported the draft resolution. His large country was served by only one single diagnostic laboratory, which made it virtually impossible to detect cases of tuberculosis. New diagnostic laboratories were badly needed. His country had reached the targets for global tuberculosis control, but the situation could deteriorate if cases of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis failed to be identified early enough.

Professor PEREIRA MIGUEL (Portugal) observed that Portugal had achieved WHO's targets for global tuberculosis control, but the incidence in specific population groups and geographical areas

remained high. Increased capacity for early detection, reduced incidence of HIV-related tuberculosis and control of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis were needed. Of particular concern were vulnerable population groups, including migrants, who reportedly accounted for a large proportion of tuberculosis cases in several European countries. Portugal was committed to promoting better health for migrants in order to improve the health of all citizens.

Dr BAE Geun-ryang (Republic of Korea) said that his country encouraged international education and training, including laboratory training and tuberculosis-control courses. In 2007 his Government had launched the first phase of a public-private collaboration aimed at reducing the tuberculosis treatment default rate and had increased the success rates for patients receiving treatment in private hospitals and clinics. It planned free treatment for patients with multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis, so that they did not discontinue treatment for financial reasons. In a globalized world, tuberculosis could not be eliminated by nations acting alone: concerted cooperation between all countries was necessary. He therefore urged all Member States to strive to attain the goals of the Global Plan and the Stop TB strategy.

Dr SANOU (Burkina Faso) said that his country's tuberculosis control programme included decentralization of diagnosis and treatment to health and social welfare centres; cooperation with community associations; involvement of the private health sector in detection and treatment of workers' health organizations; detention and correctional centres; and HIV screening and treatment of opportunistic infections for HIV-positive persons. As a result, the detection rate had risen from 18% in 2004 to over 25% in 2006 and the treatment success rate had risen from 67% to 71.5%. In order to build on those results, resources needed to be mobilized from partners and from the state budget, and the DOTS-Plus strategy comprehensively implemented; a six-month treatment regimen and the tuberculosis/HIV plan for the period 2007–2009 must be implemented. Research must be conducted on drug resistance and prevalence. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr KAMWI (Namibia) said that tuberculosis remained a public health concern in Namibia, which in 2006 had reported a case notification rate of 784 per 100 000. It had a case-detection rate of over 70% and a treatment success rate of 75%. An additional concern was that multidrug-resistant cases had been reported in Namibia. A single directorate to oversee tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria programmes had recently been established, and coordination of the tuberculosis and HIV programmes had also shifted from a health sector to a multisectoral response.

He welcomed the Global Plan to Stop TB, a reference document for Member States. In Namibia, standardized curricula on tuberculosis and HIV for the training of health-care providers had been drawn up, surveillance tools had been updated, and the DOTS strategy expanded. Namibia's tuberculosis programme faced weak coordination at all levels, a shortage of human resources, limited laboratory capacity and geographical inaccessibility. Continued support from WHO and other partners would be required in the areas of infection control, multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis, and health systems strengthening. He supported the draft resolution.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) said that the overlapping epidemics of tuberculosis and HIV required expanded access to tuberculosis treatment for HIV-infected persons. Member States should integrate clinical programmes for the treatment of the two diseases where coinfection rates were high, as they were in Africa. A strategic response must be found to the growing problem of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis. Enhanced laboratory capacity would achieve real-time sensitivity testing for first-line and second-line treatments for every person with tuberculosis worldwide. That would inform therapeutic decisions, improve patient outcomes and avoid additional drug resistance. The occurrence of HIV/tuberculosis coinfection and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis underscored the need for practical infection-control precautions. In addition, investments were needed in research, development and transfer of new rapid diagnostic procedures, including drug-susceptibility tests, safe and effective treatment regimens and vaccines.

He strongly supported the draft resolution but in view of the numerous amendments proposed, a revised version should be produced.

Mr ABDURRACHMAN (Indonesia) said that, pursuant to the Global Plan to Stop TB and the Stop TB strategy, Indonesia was implementing a five-year plan for tuberculosis control. It had met the global targets by achieving 76% case detection and 90% successful treatment of infectious cases. Ensuring sustainable funding was a challenge. Indonesia had responded to multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis. Assessments had been made, the laboratory network was being strengthened at all levels, a drug-resistance susceptibility test would provide results in the coming months and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis pilot sites under the Stop TB Partnership's Green Light Committee would be introduced.

Although he supported the draft resolution, the Secretariat should provide more support in two areas. Once the case-detection target had been reached, guidance was needed on how to reach the remaining cases more effectively, how to make the transition from passive to active case detection and how to target areas with the highest transmission rates in a way that maximized progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Indonesia urgently required new diagnostic tools at health-care facilities in order to improve detection among those suffering from smear-negative or extrapulmonary tuberculosis; among those with HIV/tuberculosis coinfection; and among children. He sought information from WHO about rapid diagnostic tests. Smear microscopy was no longer adequate as the only diagnostic tool and, in remote areas, it was not always practical.

Those two points should be incorporated into the draft resolution and he requested the Director-General to maintain support for countries struggling to reach the global targets.

Ms NGAUNJE (Malawi) said that tuberculosis threatened sustainable health and development in Africa where the number of cases was rising at an overall rate of 4%. In most African countries, up to half of the active cases remained undetected owing to lack of access to diagnostic facilities, and HIV had compounded the problem. African countries had shown commitment to fighting tuberculosis by increasing regional initiatives to increase access to diagnosis and treatment and declaring tuberculosis an emergency.

Almost half all active tuberculosis cases in Malawi were not detected. Accordingly, the Government had sought to strengthen diagnostic services from the community level upwards. The challenge remained strengthening the health system as a whole and improving core laboratory services. The tuberculosis control budget had been increased by 150%, but the programme had to be balanced against other health priorities.

The emergence of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis had regional and global implications and could erode past achievements. Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis was already present in South Africa and, given the African countries' high HIV rates and poor laboratory services and surveillance, the Region was sitting on a time bomb. If the Region's countries failed to respond in a timely and appropriate fashion, that additional health challenge would transfer into more loss of life and require huge funding resources.

She urged WHO and other partners to assist the African Region by providing additional funding for specific interventions for universal access to diagnosis, emergency plans for dealing with extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis, and core laboratory services.

Dr ASSOGBA (Benin) said that in his country control of tuberculosis had been integrated into the overall health structures in both the public and private sectors. Since the control programme was introduced in the early 1980s, involving short-term treatment, particularly of smear-positive cases, the treatment success rate had risen to 87% by 2005 and the detection rate for new smear-positive cases to 83%. Challenges remained, including building on those achievements. The problem of HIV/tuberculosis coinfection required not only medical treatment of the two diseases but also food support and treatment of related pathologies. The rural exodus of unemployed young people, drug addiction and crime compounded the difficulties of tackling the disease. Benin hosted an annual

international course on tuberculosis, an opportunity for countries to build the capacities of their health-care providers.

Dr MESSELE (Ethiopia) said that effective collaboration with HIV control programmes was essential in order to control tuberculosis in countries such as hers where coinfection was prevalent. The emergence of drug-resistant tuberculosis and the associated high mortality rate among people living with HIV/AIDS was a wake-up call for accelerated, collaborative activities. She proposed that the draft resolution should be amended by insertion of the words “and HIV-related tuberculosis” after “drug-resistant tuberculosis” in paragraph 1(1)(d) and “and HIV-associated tuberculosis” at the end of paragraph 2(2).

Professor BELLA ASSUMPTA (Cameroon) drew attention to the strong link between tuberculosis and poverty for which HIV infection was a catalyst; poverty reduction should therefore form part of tuberculosis-control strategies. The health sector should improve its prevention programmes through vaccination and develop more reliable tests. Diagnosis was especially difficult in HIV-positive patients. The emergence of multidrug-resistant cases made meeting the challenge of tuberculosis control all the more urgent.

Dr AL-SALEH (Kuwait) said that a breakthrough was required in antituberculous therapy in order to treat the disease effectively, given the rise in multidrug-resistant cases and the difficulty in simultaneously treating both tuberculosis and HIV. Some second-line antituberculosis medicines had limited efficacy although trials of new medicines were under way. The draft resolution should be amended by adding the phrase “especially enhancing research and development of new tuberculosis drugs and the interaction and relevance of nutrition and tuberculosis” at the end of paragraph 2(6).

Dr FAUORI (Jordan) said that Jordan had made significant progress in tuberculosis control, resulting in a low percentage of infections, a detection rate of 85% and a treatment rate of 90%. The DOTS strategy had been implemented successfully although recent drug-resistant cases had been difficult and expensive to treat. Further research on treatment was required. He fully supported the draft resolution.

Dr SALGADO (Chile) supported the draft resolution. Chile had a low and decreasing incidence of tuberculosis and relatively few multidrug-resistant cases or cases of coinfection with HIV. It was working towards an incidence rate of less than 5% in 2020, achieving in good time the targets set by the Millennium Development Goals; cooperation with neighbouring countries would be essential in order to ensure that immigration did not adversely affect the indicators.

Chile’s achievement was based on, among other things, political support; a public health system founded in the 1950s with a strong emphasis on primary health care; a strong health authority; free treatment; training of technical and professional staff with sound knowledge of the tuberculosis programme; control; and follow-up with epidemiological surveillance. Such measures could be helpful for many countries in combating tuberculosis, and Chile was always ready to share its experience.

Mr FORAU (Solomon Islands) said that tuberculosis remained a national health concern in the Solomon Islands with case-detection rates at 80 per 100 000, and 70% cure rates. DOTS was the main strategy used and follow-up was good, although it was difficult to reach patients in remote areas. Rates were probably underestimated, and the true prevalence of the disease was unknown. Thanks to support of donors, medicines were available at all hospitals, and treatment compliance had improved as a result of training of health workers, public education and awareness programmes. With treatment provided free, the national tuberculosis programme was becoming highly successful. He thanked development partners and endorsed the draft resolution.

Dr SEKAJUGO (Uganda) said that the rates for case detection and treatment success in his country stood at 49% and 75% respectively. Deficiencies remained in its laboratory system, with too

few health workers at lower-level health facilities. Measures implemented included: intensified training of health workers in case detection; strengthened support for supervision of peripheral health workers; procurement of laboratory equipment and supplies; and a strengthening of laboratory networks. A new tuberculosis diagnostics partnership had been established. Uganda was committed to the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015 and supported the draft resolution.

Dr DAHL-REGIS (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of 14 member countries of the Caribbean Community, said that they had applied the DOTS strategy and were committed to tuberculosis control, having included the WHO global indicators in their national strategic plans. The region was second only to Africa in HIV prevalence, a factor that affected tuberculosis control in both children and adults. Some countries in the region had not met the detection and treatment rates set by WHO, and multidrug-resistant testing continued to prove a challenge for many of them. She appealed to WHO and PAHO for support for improved supplies of pharmaceuticals and for strengthening laboratory capacity. The Caribbean countries were determined to meet WHO's targets and the Millennium Development Goals. In view of the increase in migration of people from countries with a high burden of tuberculosis, she supported the draft resolution as amended by the delegate of the Netherlands.

Mr MENESES (Mexico) said that, as part of its efforts to control tuberculosis, Mexico's "Stop tuberculosis in Mexico" committee had groups working on: clinical cases; HIV-tuberculosis coinfection; DOTS; public awareness and communication; and monitoring and evaluation. Mindful of the World TB Day 2007 slogan: "From local action to global elimination – Tuberculosis anywhere is TB everywhere", Mexico supported the draft resolution and was ready to work with other Member States and share its experience in an effort to eliminate the disease.

Dr MTONGA (Zambia) said that the presence of HIV/AIDS had exacerbated the tuberculosis burden. There had been a slight reduction in the number of tuberculosis cases in Zambia from 53 000 in 2005 to some 51 000 in 2006. About 70% of people with tuberculosis in Zambia were coinfecting with HIV and about half of HIV patients would go on to develop tuberculosis. Zambia was striving to reach the targets set by WHO through continued strengthening of its DOTS strategy, which had achieved 100% coverage, and through fixed-dose combination therapies, strengthened tuberculosis and HIV collaborative activities, public–private partnerships, increased surveillance for multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and strengthened laboratory and procurement systems. Cure rates had improved from 67% in 2002 to 76% in 2006 and case detection rates had risen to 69%. The treatment success rate was 84%, close to the WHO target. Challenges included limited numbers of health personnel, lack of infrastructure and limited funding. Zambia supported the draft resolution.

Ms DE HOZ (Argentina), citing statistics on tuberculosis cases and deaths in Argentina, said that the country's tuberculosis control programme espoused the principles set out in the report. Her Government had embraced the Millennium Development Goal relating to tuberculosis, and set a national goal of reducing gaps among provinces and departments within Argentina. The tuberculosis programme encouraged community participation, notably in schools, and worked with the national AIDS programme. Argentina would apply to the Stop TB Partnership's Green Light Committee for the procurement of affordable, high-quality, second-line medicines. Argentina's tuberculosis laboratories were raising standards and quality assurance. She supported the draft resolution.

Professor MIKHAILOVA (Russian Federation) noted that the G8 group of industrialized countries, at their summit in St Petersburg in July 2006, had endorsed the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015. Her country was still endemic for tuberculosis and there had been no significant change in the high prevalence. It had not met the internationally agreed targets for case detection or for successful treatment. The number of cases of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, for which treatment was much more expensive, had increased.

WHO's Stop TB strategy, adopted by the Ministry of Health, contained new methods of detecting, registering and treating tuberculosis patients, and, although training of personnel was

prominent within the strategy, shortcomings had been observed in the complexity of adapting DOTS principles to national practice.

She advocated a systematic approach, based on the strengthening of preventive measures and active detection using all available methods. Treatment should use standard medicines but take into account the nature of each case, and should be evaluated both at individual level and in terms of the entire system of antituberculosis measures. Independent analysis of tuberculosis control should determine its effectiveness and identify potential improvements.

Her country's experience could benefit international efforts to control tuberculosis. She supported the draft resolution and, in order to achieve the tuberculosis-related Millennium Development Goal, the Russian Federation would actively implement the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015.

Mr KAZIHISE (Burundi) said that Burundi had a specific tuberculosis-control programme as part of its public health policy. The disease predominantly affected the population aged 15 to 44 – people in their most active years – who accounted for 75% of cases. With a case detection rate of 42% and treatment success rate of 52% in 2006, Burundi was still far from achieving the targets set by WHO, but Burundi was emerging from a 10-year war and in recent years had suffered a series of severe weather events. Those factors had seriously hindered efforts to control tuberculosis. The health sector would increase its collaboration with other sectors as the foundation for success. He thanked WHO and the other partners that had supported Burundi's tuberculosis-control programme and invited others to join them.

Dr CARBALLO QUESADA (Costa Rica) said that pulmonary disease accounted for 86% of all cases of tuberculosis diagnosed in Costa Rica. Tuberculosis mortality had been declining since 1999 and currently stood at around 2.3 deaths per 100 000 population, although mortality statistics were affected by underreporting and problems with certification of causes of death. Since 2004, DOTS coverage had been 95% and a DOTS-plus programme had been providing second-line medicines to patients with multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. She supported the draft resolution.

Dr OLIVEROS (Philippines) supported the draft resolution and highlighted public–private partnerships, which should be expanded in order to broaden access to DOTS services and to synchronize activities within the national tuberculosis programmes. In the Philippines, the private sector had played a key role in dealing with multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. She endorsed the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015, which called for collaboration with other programmes, notably that for child health, and urged Member States to enhance the management of childhood tuberculosis.

Father VITILLO (Holy See) urged the Health Assembly to promote more effective tuberculosis programming in all countries by adopting the draft resolution. Mindful of community-based tuberculosis programmes sponsored by the Catholic Church and other faith-based organizations, he emphasized collaboration between the Secretariat, Member States and civil society organizations in tackling the tuberculosis pandemic in a holistic manner.

Ms CLARISSA (International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, and on behalf of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations, said that the Federations supported WHO's tuberculosis-control initiatives by raising awareness among medical and pharmaceutical students and among the general public. She supported the efforts of WHO and the Stop TB Partnership to promote research on new diagnostics, medicines and vaccines. Health-care providers and the public should be made aware of the importance of not misusing tuberculosis medicines, especially second-line treatments. It was important to strengthen monitoring mechanisms and estimation of the impact of control activities on the tuberculosis burden. That need was acknowledged in the draft resolution. It was important for the Secretariat and Member States to engage providers in the Stop TB Strategy and to support an environment of multidisciplinary

collaboration. Such collaboration among health-care students would influence their future practice and could be the key to future success in the fight against tuberculosis.

Dr OMI (Regional Director for the Western Pacific) noted that the Western Pacific Region had achieved the global goals for case detection and successful treatment. Several factors had proved crucial to the Region's success. In 1999, the Regional Committee had set the goal of halving tuberculosis prevalence and mortality by 2010. The Region had then developed a strategic plan for 2000–2005 and Member States had then elaborated their own budgets and plans. Strong political commitment by Member States and a powerful partnership between countries and agencies for mobilizing the necessary resources had been instrumental in achieving the 2005 targets.

Dr NAKATANI (Assistant Director-General) congratulated Member States on their successes in stemming tuberculosis. He had taken note of the suggestions with regard to monitoring and surveillance, financial sustainability, the maintenance of a high-quality DOTS programme, enhancement of research and development, the building of laboratory capacity, multidrug-resistant and highly drug-resistant tuberculosis, HIV/tuberculosis coinfection, the need for more financial resources and better coordination, and the importance of addressing the needs of especially vulnerable and high-risk populations.

Responding to the questions raised by the delegate of Indonesia concerning intensified case finding after the 70% case detection target had been achieved, WHO recommended that countries should: ensure that all health facilities were reporting cases to local tuberculosis authorities; target case-finding to high-risk groups; increase community awareness of tuberculosis; and ensure that staff had the necessary information and training in order to detect cases promptly. Although rapid culture methods were available, rapid diagnostic kits for determining drug susceptibility were not. WHO was involved in developing and evaluating such tools, however, and would communicate relevant information to Member States as it became available.

The CHAIRMAN said that the draft resolution would be revised, incorporating the various proposed amendments, and distributed for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

(For continuation of the discussion, see summary record of the eighth meeting.)

The meeting rose at 17:50.

SEVENTH MEETING

Friday, 18 May 2007, at 09:45

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

1. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm: Item 12.7 of the Agenda (Documents A60/14 and A60/14 Add.1)

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider two draft resolutions. The first, proposed by the delegations of Afghanistan, Armenia, Austria, Bahrain, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Viet Nam and Zambia, read as follows:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm, including the addendum, on a global assessment of public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol;¹

Reaffirming resolutions WHA32.40, WHA36.12, and recalling that resolution WHA58.26 on Public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol requested the Director-General to draw up recommendations for effective policies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm, and to develop technical tools that would support Member States in implementing and evaluating recommended strategies and programmes;

Recognizing progress made by the Secretariat, in particular the recommendations of Expert Committee on Problems related to Alcohol Consumption;²

Recognizing that the major global burden of disease is currently attributable to noncommunicable diseases, and that the harmful use of alcohol is likely to cause a significant increase in this burden;

Noting the urgent need to develop strategic measures effectively to counteract the harmful use of alcohol in order to complement existing strategies to prevent and control noncommunicable diseases that target other avoidable determinants;

Expressing profound concern that harmful use of alcohol was responsible for more than 2.3 million premature deaths worldwide in 2002,³ that is one of the major avoidable determinants of the disease burden, and that it is increasingly affecting populations worldwide;

¹ Documents A60/14 and A60/14 Add.1.

² WHO Technical Report Series No. 944, 2007.

³ Document A60/14 Add.1.

Noting that IARC (Group 1 agent),¹ has categorized ethanol in alcoholic beverages as carcinogenic to humans and that the occurrence of various malignant tumors, including of colorectum and female breast, are causally related to alcohol consumption;

Mindful that harmful use of alcohol can seriously harm people other than the drinker;

Recognizing the need to protect those individuals and groups who are at risk of being negatively affected by the drinking of others, in particular partners and children in families with alcohol problems and persons at workplaces, and to assure transport safety;

Noting the complexity of alcohol-related problems, and the need for comprehensive evidence-based policy measures and cost-effective interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm;

Acknowledging that effective strategies and interventions that target both the population at large and specific groups are available and should be optimally combined in order to reduce alcohol-related harm;

Stressing that such strategies and interventions must be implemented in a balanced and appropriate way according to existing religious, cultural and traditional contexts;

Noting with appreciation the positive results in reducing harmful use of alcohol obtained in all WHO regions;

Firmly convinced that global leadership to combat alcohol-related harm is urgently needed;

Recognizing WHO's leadership in global public-health policies on reducing harmful use of alcohol,

1. URGES Member States:

(1) to collaborate with WHO in developing a global plan to reduce harmful use of alcohol based on evidence and best practices, with special emphasis on an integrated approach to protect at-risk populations and people harmed by the drinking of others;

(2) to strengthen national responses, as appropriate, to public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol, taking advantage of evidence on effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm;²

(3) to determine national alcohol strategies and programmes, including plans for implementation, and to establish, sustain or reinforce as appropriate national targets to reduce the harmful use of alcohol;

(4) to establish or to develop appropriate national monitoring systems on alcohol consumption and its health and social consequences, linked to WHO global and regional information systems, in order to guide adequate national responses and to measure progress in reducing harmful use of alcohol at regional and global levels;

2. CALLS UPON international organizations and bodies concerned with harmful use of alcohol to engage in global efforts to reduce alcohol-related harm;

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to ensure a significant strengthening of prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases as an overarching priority in the work of WHO;

(2) to strengthen and intensify the work of the Secretariat on developing and implementing global and regional strategies and plans, as appropriate, and to provide technical support to Member States when requested for reducing public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol, taking into account the full range of its health, social and economic consequences;

¹ *IARC Monograph on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans*. Lyons, International Agency for Research on Cancer, Vol. 96, 2007.

² Document A60/14, paragraphs 5 and 6.

- (3) to ensure appropriate active engagement and commitment free from conflict of interest of concerned organizations within the United Nations system, international nongovernmental organizations, private-sector entities and other relevant stakeholders;
- (4) to submit to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly a global plan on reduction of alcohol-related harm that takes into account evidence on cost-effective interventions and is drawn up after consultation with Member States, nongovernmental organizations, private-sector entities and other relevant stakeholders.

The second draft resolution, proposed by the delegations of New Zealand and Sweden after consultation in an informal working group, incorporated amendments to the first draft resolution and read as follows:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm, including the addendum on a global assessment of public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol;¹

Reaffirming resolutions WHA32.40 and WHA36.12, recalling that resolution WHA58.26 on Public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol requested the Director-General to draw up recommendations for effective policies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm, and to develop technical tools that would support Member States in implementing and evaluating recommended strategies and programmes;

Recognizing progress made by the Secretariat in this regard, and the need for additional analysis and work on effective evidence-based interventions;

Recognizing that the major global burden of disease is currently attributable to noncommunicable diseases, and that harmful use of alcohol is likely to cause a significant increase in this burden;

Recognizing further the potential impact of harmful use of alcohol on the spread of infectious diseases;

Recognizing also that neuropsychiatric disorders, including alcohol dependence, as part of the burden of noncommunicable diseases, account for more than one third of the burden of disease attributable to the harmful use of alcohol;

Noting the urgent need to develop strategic measures effectively to counteract the harmful use of alcohol in order to complement existing strategies to prevent and control noncommunicable diseases and to reduce the disease burden from neuropsychiatric disorders and injuries;

Recognizing that alcohol production and consumption patterns vary considerably around the world and include substantial informal and illicit production, distribution and consumption;

Expressing profound concern that harmful use of alcohol was responsible for more than 2.3 million premature deaths worldwide in 2002,² that it is one of the major avoidable determinants of the disease burden, and that it is increasingly affecting populations worldwide;

¹ Documents A60/14 and A60/14 Add.1.

² Document A60/14 Add.1.

Noting that IARC has categorized ethanol in alcoholic beverages as carcinogenic to humans (Group 1 agents),¹ and that the occurrence of various malignant tumors, including of the colorectum and female breast, are causally related to alcohol consumption;

Mindful that harmful use of alcohol can seriously harm people other than the drinker;

Recognizing the need to protect those individuals and groups who are at risk of being negatively affected by the harmful drinking of others, in particular partners and children in families with alcohol problems and persons at workplaces, and to assure transport safety;

Noting the complexity of alcohol-related problems, and the need for comprehensive evidence-based policy measures and cost-effective interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm;

Acknowledging that effective strategies and interventions that target both the population at large and specific groups are available and should be optimally combined in order to reduce alcohol-related harm;

Stressing that such strategies and interventions must be implemented in a balanced and appropriate way according to existing religious, socioeconomic, cultural and traditional contexts;

Noting with appreciation the positive results in reducing harmful use of alcohol obtained in all WHO regions;

Firmly convinced that global leadership to combat alcohol-related harm is urgently needed;

Recognizing WHO's leadership in global public-health policies on harmful use of alcohol,

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to collaborate with WHO in developing a draft global strategy on harmful use of alcohol based on evidence and best practices, with special emphasis on an integrated approach to protect at-risk populations and people hurt by the harmful drinking of others;
- (2) to strengthen national responses, as appropriate, to public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol, taking advantage of evidence on effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm;²
- (3) to determine comprehensive, multisectoral national alcohol strategies and programmes, including plans for implementation, taking into account the substantial role of informal alcohol production, distribution and consumption, and to establish, sustain or reinforce as appropriate national targets to reduce the harmful use of alcohol;
- (4) to establish or to develop appropriate national monitoring systems on alcohol consumption and its health and social consequences, linked to WHO global and regional information systems, in order to guide adequate national responses and to measure progress in reducing harmful use of alcohol at national, regional and global levels;

2. CALLS UPON international organizations and bodies concerned with harmful use of alcohol to engage in global efforts to reduce alcohol-related harm;

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to address the public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol in the context of the priority given to prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases;
- (2) to strengthen and intensify the work of the Secretariat on developing and implementing global and regional strategies and plans, as appropriate, and to provide technical support to Member States when requested for reducing public-health problems

¹ *IARC Monograph on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans*. Lyons, International Agency for Research on Cancer, Vol. 96, 2007.

² Document A60/14, paragraphs 5 and 6.

caused by harmful use of alcohol, taking into account the full range of its health, social and economic consequences;

(3) to continue to collaborate with Member States and concerned intergovernmental organizations, health professionals, nongovernmental organizations, and other relevant stakeholders in order to promote implementation of effective policies and programmes to reduce harmful use of alcohol, and to develop a draft global strategy;

(4) to continue consulting with the private sector, particularly the alcoholic beverage industry, on ways it could contribute to reducing harmful use of alcohol;

(5) to submit to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly a draft global strategy on reducing the public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol, based on evidence and best practices, with special emphasis on an integrated approach to protecting at-risk populations and people harmed by drinking of others.

The financial and administrative implications of the draft resolution were as follows:

1. Resolution Global action on the harmful use of alcohol	
2. Linkage to programme budget	
Biennium 2008–2009	Expected result
Strategic objective: 6	4. Evidence-based and ethical policies, strategies, recommendations, standards and guidelines developed, and technical support provided to Member States with a high or increasing burden of disease or death associated with alcohol, drugs and other psychoactive substance use, enabling them to strengthen institutions in order to combat or prevent the public health problems concerned.
(Briefly indicate the linkage with expected results, indicators, targets, baseline)	
The resolution will strengthen and intensify the Secretariat's work on developing and implementing strategies and plans and providing technical support to Member States for reducing public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol. It will also lead to the development of a global plan on reduction of alcohol-related harm in consultation with Member States, nongovernmental organizations, private-sector entities and other relevant stakeholders.	
3. Financial implications	
(a) Total estimated cost for implementation over the "life-cycle" of the resolution (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000, including staff and activities) US\$ 18 830 000	
(b) Estimated cost for the biennium 2008–2009 (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000, including staff and activities) US\$ 12 830 000	
(c) Of the estimated cost noted in (b), what can be subsumed under existing programmed activities? US\$ 10 400 000	
4. Administrative implications	
(a) Implementation locales (indicate the levels of the Organization at which the work will be undertaken and identify the specific regions where relevant)	
Work will mainly take place at the global level, but consultations with Member States will be organized in the six regions.	

(b) Additional staffing requirements (indicate additional required staff full-time equivalents, noting necessary skills profile)

For the biennium 2008–2009, two additional staff in the professional category, and one additional general service staff member will be required at headquarters. No additional staff will be required at regional level.

(c) Time frames (indicate broad time frames for implementation and the evaluation)

Activities will be concentrated on preparing for the report that is to be submitted to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly. Work will then focus on follow-up activities and evaluation until the end of 2013.

Ms NILSSON-KELLY (Sweden), introducing the draft resolution, said that the adoption of resolution WHA58.26 had marked a significant step towards improving the health of millions of people suffering from the harmful use of alcohol. Since then, however, many Member States had moved towards health advocacy as an approach. WHO regional committees had demonstrated awareness, growing concern, and willingness to explore ways of reducing the harmful use of alcohol. Moreover, the Secretariat had reported to the Executive Board at its 120th session in January 2007 that further consultations were needed in order to draft additional recommendations and to construct a framework for global activities. The intention of the draft resolution was to provide guidance on such a framework.

Progress had been made by WHO in tackling risk factors and determinants for noncommunicable diseases, yet strategic directions for combating the harmful use of alcohol was lacking. The proposed draft resolution was a step forward. Several Member States had expressed their support for the draft resolution, but wished to see clearer, sharper language.

The second draft resolution reflected the amendments discussed in an informal working group convened by New Zealand and was intended to facilitate discussion in the Committee. If it had caused more confusion than clarity, she apologized.

Dr BLOOMFIELD (New Zealand) said that coordinated global action was essential, and he strongly supported the draft resolution. The informal working group had made available in all six official languages the proposed amendments that some delegations had been expected to discuss. He stressed that the group did not have a negotiating mandate, nor did the second draft resolution replace the earlier one.

As convenor of the informal working group, he summarized the main proposals raised: in the third preambular paragraph, to amend or delete the reference to the recommendations of the Expert Committee on Problems Related to Alcohol Consumption; to include a preambular paragraph on the illicit production and consumption of alcohol; to include a reference to infectious diseases and their relationship with harmful alcoholic use; to change the word “plan” to “strategy” in the relevant paragraphs, so that Member States and the Director-General would be requested to develop a draft global strategy; and to be clearer about the roles of different stakeholders, in particular that of the private sector or industry, including with respect to developing and implementing the proposed draft strategy.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that the harmful use of alcohol was not a significant health problem in Iraq. Nevertheless, planning for the integration of mental health services into primary health care had taken into account the need for prevention of harmful use. Sustainable development and the integration of health issues into economic and social development were essential to overcoming the problem.

Dr PANTELEEVA (Russian Federation) said that the harmful use of alcohol and its social consequences were topical matters in her country. The anti-alcohol campaign conducted from 1985 to 1987 had had positive but short-lasting effects, and the reforms of the 1990s had led to an increase in

alcohol use. Although drinks with low alcoholic content had been introduced, alcoholism was emerging among young people and would have epidemiological consequences. WHO should adopt a strategy that took account of the complexities involved at individual and societal levels and that enabled each country to adopt policies tailored to national conditions. Her country would not accept measures to increase the price of alcoholic drinks, which would simply lead to the production of illicit alcohol and potent liqueurs and spirits. She recognized the need for further research into the harmful effects of alcohol use and for a global strategy based on experience already gained, especially in the European Region.

Mr JAKSONS (Latvia) supported the second draft resolution although it could be more precise. Drinking behaviours were a key aspect of the problem. He drew attention to the important distinction between the “harmful use of alcohol” and “alcohol-related harm”, the term previously used, stressing the much broader approach it implied. “Alcohol – less is better”, the strong message in the European Charter on Alcohol adopted by the European Conference on Health, Society and Alcohol (Paris, 12-14 December 1995), was the basis on which WHO should build the strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol. He endorsed the proposal to reduce the availability of alcohol, especially to young people.

Dr AYDINLI (Turkey) emphasized the need to strengthen education and for global information and regional surveillance systems, particularly for young people. Technical support and cooperation between organizations would be required. Manufacturers and distributors should be encouraged to join the effort to reduce the harmful effects of alcohol consumption. Countries should draw up national strategies and programmes.

Dr PRAK Piseth Raingsey (Cambodia) said that the availability and consumption of all types of alcohol, including home-made and locally produced beverages, had increased in Cambodia. Numerous deaths had resulted from consumption of drink contaminated with cheap lethal ingredients, such as methanol, or pesticides. There were no restrictions on the sale or advertising of alcohol and no requirement for health warnings. The economic loss to society resulting from the harmful consumption of alcohol was likely to be substantial when the impact on health, productivity and economic development was taken into account. She urged the Health Assembly to adopt the resolution.

Mr SEGURA (Dominican Republic) pointed out that alcohol was used not only to produce beverages but for other purposes, including medicines and cosmetics. He suggested, therefore, that the term “harmful use of alcohol” should be replaced in the draft resolution by the term “harmful effect of the misuse of alcohol”. He proposed deleting the tenth preambular paragraph of the first draft resolution because, apart from the claims of one monograph, there was as yet no conclusive evidence to support the theory that ethanol in alcoholic beverages was carcinogenic to humans.

Dr MUSTAFA (Sudan), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that the Region was the least affected by the burden of harmful alcohol use because, for religious reasons, alcohol was banned in most countries. Nevertheless, alcohol consumption by vulnerable young people had become a concern. The report emphasized global surveillance systems. However, most global data were estimated, and their reliability in many countries was questionable. Moreover, most questionnaires used in routine surveillance did not record illicit alcohol consumption or the more unusual medical complications of alcohol abuse. Data collection systems must be appropriate for all countries.

Most strategies to combat alcohol misuse had been elaborated in countries where alcohol was sold freely, and focused on regulatory mechanisms such as taxation, price, minimum age for purchasing alcohol and opening hours of sales outlets. However, such strategies would not work well in countries where most of the alcohol consumed was obtained unofficially or produced illicitly in the local area or in the home. Countries must develop their capacity to control unofficial and illicit alcohol consumption through initiatives centred on the community, and on awareness-raising and educational

programmes. The health systems of many countries would need to expand their capacity to manage alcohol dependence and alcohol-related health problems.

The report should have stressed the need to increase capacity at the regional and country levels for the management of alcoholism and other alcohol-related problems. The comprehensive policy framework referred to in paragraph 11 should use customized surveillance, which would also apply to countries where most alcohol was obtained unofficially. The monitoring tools referred to in paragraph 12 should be adapted in order to take both global uniformity and local differences into account. Global leadership and advice on responding to public health problems caused by alcohol should adapt global strategies to the local level. The report should also have highlighted the need to support the prevention of alcohol problems through educational programmes for young people. The regional differences he had described should be reflected in the draft resolution.

Dr DEGROOF (Belgium) said that it was unclear which draft resolution was being considered. Belgium was preparing a national action plan on alcohol that gave priority to activities aimed at young people. Measures already taken included a ban on the sale of spirits to minors; campaigns to raise awareness among young people; and campaigns aimed at drivers, combined with increased alcohol testing, which had reduced drink-driving.

WHO's work on prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in general should be scaled up. However, he doubted whether data on the social and health consequences of the misuse of alcohol were comparable and reliable, as called for in paragraph 1(4) of the draft resolution. He proposed the following amendment to that subparagraph: "to establish or develop appropriate monitoring systems on alcohol consumption and its adverse effects using uniform definitions, indicators and methods developed by WHO".

Ms REITENBACH (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, said that the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova aligned themselves with her statement. Europe was greatly affected by the consequences of the harmful use of alcohol. A draft strategy on reducing alcohol-related harm, which included a comprehensive account of the risks and consequences, had been adopted by the European Union.

Member States should promote a cross-sectoral approach to the prevention of alcohol-related harm, involving coordinated strategies and actions at municipal, regional and national levels. She emphasized the enforcement of existing legal provisions, for drink-driving or the serving of alcoholic drinks to minors, as well as the promotion of healthy choices through marketing, product information and consumer education.

Reports on the implementation of the strategy would be available from 2008, and a forum for alcohol and health would be set up for all interested stakeholders. WHO should take the lead in devising a strategy for combating alcohol-related harm, based on science, evidence and best practice. National targets, monitoring systems and implementation plans needed to be established or reinforced.

She supported the first draft resolution, but with an amended third preambular paragraph that read: "Recognizing progress made by the Secretariat and noting the recommendations of the Expert Committee on Problems Related to Alcohol Consumption".

Dr LEVENTHAL (Israel) said that the harmful use of alcohol had only been a problem in his country for about 15 years. The associated increase in road traffic accidents, violence and premature deaths affected young people particularly. There was an urgent need for a global strategic plan of action, as recommended in the second draft resolution.

Dr HIGUCHI (Japan) said that every Member State must respond to the problems caused by the harmful use of alcohol by choosing evidence-based and cost-effective policies appropriate to its own economic, social and cultural situation and the nature of the problems caused by harmful use of

alcohol. He also stressed the significance of exchanging information, including basic data on alcohol consumption and on the nature and precise causes of and responses to alcohol-related problems.

He supported the draft resolution in principle, although some points from the revised version might be taken into account. In the former, “plan” in paragraphs 1(1) and 3(4) should be replaced by “strategy”, giving Member States more flexibility. A definition of the term “global strategy” should be added, indicating that it was a guide to help Member States to promote and implement their own responses to problems caused by the harmful use of alcohol. Paragraph 3(1) should be deleted, as it referred to noncommunicable diseases in general and not specifically to problems caused by harmful use of alcohol. A new subparagraph should be added to paragraph 3, requesting the Director-General to report periodically to the Health Assembly on the global situation relating to the harmful use of alcohol, policy responses and progress made.

Dr BLOOMFIELD (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Sweden, formally withdrew the second draft resolution, since it had clearly caused confusion among delegates.

Dr THAKSAPON THAMARANGSI (Thailand) said that policy on alcohol control must be evidence-based, relevant and cover both population-based and individual interventions. He had noted that recommended cost-effective strategies included taxation and control over the availability of alcohol. In trade and economic terms, alcohol was treated like any other commodity, but the negative health and economic impact of alcohol misuse far outweighed any benefits. WHO should lead in raising awareness outside the health sector of the harm which alcohol could cause. Alcohol had never been a theme for World Health Day, for example.

The consumption of alcohol had increased greatly in the developing world. The South-East Asia Region had adopted policy options relating to alcohol in 2006. The recommendations of the Expert Committee on Problems related to Alcohol Consumption should be adopted as the basis for global action.

Consultation with the alcoholic beverage industry would help implementation, but it must not be allowed to influence policy formulation. Like the tobacco industry, the alcoholic beverage industry considered that effective policies such as taxation and the regulation of availability of its products were not in its best interests. He supported the draft resolution of which his delegation was a sponsor.

Mr STRAWCZYNSKI (Canada) said that evidence from his own country suggested that reducing alcohol-related harm required a multifaceted approach, with strategies such as social marketing, community information campaigns, regulation and enforcement.

In the third preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, the reference to the Expert Committee on Problems related to Alcohol Consumption should be removed, since those recommendations had not been circulated widely enough to allow full consideration of their implications. A new preambular paragraph should be added, reading: “Recognizing the harm caused by drinking during pregnancy;” and the tenth preambular paragraph should be amended to read: “Noting the complexity of alcohol-related problems, the need to address the underlying causes of the harmful use of alcohol, and the need for comprehensive evidence-based policy measures ...”. Paragraph 3(4) should be amended to read: “... a draft global plan that can be adapted to national circumstances as appropriate ...”.

Dr MAOATE (Cook Islands) said that legislation had been drafted in his country to deal with the negative effects of alcohol use; the extensive social consequences included the deaths of young people in road traffic accidents and poor health. Strategic measures were needed. He supported the draft resolution and any additional amendments that would strengthen it.

Mr EINARSSON (Iceland) urged Member States to adopt the draft resolution by consensus. Meaningful results on the question could only be achieved through international consensus.

Mr VOLJČ (Slovenia) called for more public and political attention to the harmful use of alcohol often demonstrated by adults or young people. Such models could lead to harmful drinking

habits, sometimes resulting in fatal or serious injuries. With birth rates decreasing and societies ageing, every young life lost represented the loss of a future parent, a loss for society. Reducing harmful drinking among young people required collaboration between the sectors and with interested nongovernmental organizations. Slovenia would highlight the issue of intentional and unintentional injuries related to alcohol, particularly among young people, during its forthcoming presidency of the European Union.

Turning to the draft resolution, he suggested inserting the word “youngsters” in the ninth preambular paragraph, after “in particular”.

Ms JOHRI (India) commented that policies and interventions targeting vulnerable populations could prevent alcohol-related harm. She endorsed the strategies outlined in document A60/14, and supported the draft resolution as amended by the delegates of Afghanistan, Norway and other Member States.

Professor PEREIRA MIGUEL (Portugal) observed that alcohol consumption was high in his country, resulting in considerable alcohol-related harm. He supported the draft resolution.

Mr GARBANZO (Costa Rica) agreed that the harmful use of alcohol was a public health problem with serious social and economic repercussions, necessitating policies aimed at the general public as well as vulnerable groups. Although alcohol consumption per capita was relatively low in Costa Rica, the harmful use of alcohol was prevalent among young people aged between 18 and 30 (40%), and those between 12 and 24 years (24%).

Effective policies to counteract the harmful use of alcohol should focus on supply and demand, and should target those who drank to excess and places where high quantities of alcohol were consumed. The accessibility, availability and marketing of alcoholic beverages should be regulated in order to reduce supply and the social acceptability of alcohol consumption. Marketing, advertising and sponsorship should be regulated in order to protect those under 18, together with inter-institutional approaches to the control, prevention and treatment of alcohol-use disorders.

The need to reduce alcohol-related harm in order to protect individuals and groups negatively affected by others' drinking was particularly relevant to road traffic accidents, as highlighted by the Declaration of San José of September 2006. In 2000, Latin America and the Caribbean had had the highest average incidence of fatalities from road traffic accidents in the world, and most were related to excessive alcohol consumption. His Government was seeking examples of best practice that it could adapt to the problem in Costa Rica. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr TANGI (Tonga), speaking as a sponsor of the draft resolution, supported the proposal to delete the third preambular paragraph, and suggested amending the fifth preambular paragraph to begin “Noting the urgent need to develop effective strategic measures”. The word “of” before “colorectal” in the seventh preambular paragraph should be deleted. He supported the proposal to replace the word “plan” by “strategy” in paragraphs 1(1) and 3(4).

Following adoption of resolution WHA58.26, there had been wide consultation in the Western Pacific Region. The resulting regional strategy, adopted in September 2006, emphasized reducing the risk and minimizing the impact of the harmful use of alcohol, regulating the accessibility and availability of alcohol, and implementation of the strategy. Although he had no objection to the current discussions, he failed to understand why a global strategy was under consideration when all the regions were implementing strategies in response to resolution WHA58.26.

(For resumption of the discussion, see section 3 below.)

2. DRAFT MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN, INCLUDING PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET 2008–2009: Item 11 of the Agenda (continued)

Draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2009: Item 11.1 of the Agenda (Documents A/MTSP/2008–2013/PB2008–2009, A/MTSP/2008–2013/PB2008–2009 Corr.1 and Corr.2) (continued from the fourth meeting)

Proposed programme budget 2008–2009: Item 11.2 of the Agenda (Documents A/MTSP/2008–2013/PB2008–2009, A/MTSP/2008–2013/PB2008–2009 Corr.1 and Corr.2) (continued from the fourth meeting)

Real estate: draft capital master plan: Item 11.3 of the Agenda (Documents A60/5 and A60/INF.DOC./3) (continued from the fourth meeting)

Mrs PRADHAN (Assistant Director-General) said that the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 had been based on detailed discussions of the Eleventh General Programme of Work. Technical teams from the six regions and headquarters had worked together on the strategic objectives. Member States had provided guidance and support through technical discussions at the regional level for the General Programme of Work and the strategic plan, as had the six regional committees and the Programme and Budget Advisory Committee and the Executive Board.

Responding to questions and comments, she said that strategic objective 6 dealt with the six major risk factors that accounted for more than 60% of mortality and 50% of morbidity by focusing on a core set of intersectoral population strategies. Strategic objective 3 addressed primary prevention efforts aimed at other risk factors for noncommunicable diseases, injuries, violence and mental disorders. Visual impairment had been added to strategic objective 3, in line with the advice of several Member States.

Strategic objective 4 covered most of the current programmes affecting sexual and reproductive health, but aspects of the topic were also addressed through other strategic objectives, such as 2 and 6. The Secretariat had noted the comments by the delegates of El Salvador, Kuwait, Malta, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia and the United States of America.

The Secretariat recognized the need to maintain the funding level for the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and to ensure more transparent reporting on the WHO contribution to the Codex budget. Strategic objective 9 had a strong focus on normative work relating to nutrition, food safety and food security.

The Secretariat had consolidated the proposed objectives related to health systems into one single strategic objective with a comprehensive approach to improving performance. The scope of strategic objective 10 reflected that approach; by aligning the work to be undertaken, the large number of expected results had been significantly reduced. However, the Secretariat had noted the need for further alignment and greater clarity.

The level of the budget for health financing and social protection in the Proposed programme budget 2008–2009 was US\$ 116 million.

Public health innovation and intellectual property were integral to the Organization's work under several strategic objectives. Most of that work, however, fell under the Organization-wide expected result 11.1. Expected results with relevant budgets would be developed, in the light of the outcome of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group and decisions taken at the Sixty-first World Health Assembly.

The reference in strategic objective 11 to UNITAID not funding work on promoting the rational use of medicines would be removed from the final document.

WHO was working on trade and health, with WTO, the World Bank and other relevant partners, in accordance with resolution WHA59.26.

A draft plan of action responded specifically to a recommendation from the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System on multilingualism, and would be further discussed by the

Executive Board at its 121st session. The plan of action, costing about US\$ 20 million over the six years 2008–2013, would be included under strategic objective 12.

The Director-General had recently committed herself to a full review of WHO publications, including an assessment of expenditure on publishing. The review would lead to a comprehensive publication policy for discussion at the Programme and Budget Advisory Committee in 2008, including recommendations on possible cost efficiencies.

Regarding WHO's participation in the United Nations harmonization and coordination processes, the country coordination strategy was being better integrated into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the health programmes of other United Nations agencies. She agreed that WHO's work with United Nations partners should be reflected throughout the strategic plan and the strategic objectives, and that would be taken into account in the workplans.

As requested by the Executive Board, the capital master plan requirements for 2008–2009 were budgeted as an integral part of the programme budget, and were included in strategic objective 13.

She emphasized gender mainstreaming throughout the Organization's programmes. In her address to the Health Assembly, the Director-General had stated that she was asking all programmes to collect and report data disaggregated by sex, and had given instructions for gender mainstreaming to be considered in all activities. All strategic objectives would incorporate the gender perspective and WHO would be guided by the new gender strategy in that regard.

With regard to the financing of the programme budget, the Secretariat and Member States were working to increase the mobilization of negotiated core contributions. Mechanisms were being designed for that purpose. The Secretariat was also considering the level of programme support costs needed to cover the costs inherent in programme implementation.

Activities would be scaled down or phased out once completed or when new priorities emerged. In accordance with the Director-General's instructions, greater budgetary discipline would be exercised.

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolution on the appropriation for the financial period 2008–2009, which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

1. NOTES the total effective budget under all sources of funds of US\$ 4 227 480 000;
2. RESOLVES to appropriate for the financial period 2008–2009 an amount of US\$ 1 038 840 000, financed by net assessments on Members of US\$ 928 840 000, estimated Miscellaneous Income of US\$ 30 000 000, and transfer to Tax Equalization Fund of US\$ 80 000 000, as shown below:

Appropriation section	Purpose of appropriation	Appropriations financed by net assessments and Miscellaneous Income Amount US\$
1	To reduce the health, social and economic burden of communicable diseases	85 368 000
2	To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis	48 996 000
3	To prevent and reduce disease, disability and premature death from chronic noncommunicable conditions, mental disorders, violence, injuries and visual impairment	45 215 000
4	To reduce morbidity and mortality and improve health during key stages of life, including pregnancy, childbirth, the neonatal period, childhood and adolescence, and improve sexual and reproductive health and promote active and healthy ageing for all individuals	55 909 000
5	To reduce the health consequences of emergencies, disasters, crises and conflicts, and minimize their social and economic impact	17 631 000
6	To promote health and development, and prevent or reduce risk factors for health conditions associated with use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and other psychoactive substances, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and unsafe sex	39 077 000
7	To address the underlying social and economic determinants of health through policies and programmes that enhance health equity and integrate pro-poor, gender-responsive, and human rights-based approaches	14 427 000
8	To promote a healthier environment, intensify primary prevention and influence public policies in all sectors so as to address the root causes of environmental threats to health	32 736 000
9	To improve nutrition, food safety and food security throughout the life-course and in support of public health and sustainable development	23 054 000
10	To improve health services through better governance, financing, staffing and management, informed by reliable and accessible evidence and research	139 630 000
11	To ensure improved access, quality and use of medical products and technologies	31 244 000

Appropriation section	Purpose of appropriation	Appropriations financed by net assessments and Miscellaneous Income Amount US\$
12	To provide leadership, strengthen governance and foster partnership and collaboration with countries, the United Nations system, and other stakeholders in order to fulfill the mandate of WHO in advancing the global health agenda as set out in the Eleventh General Programme of Work	139 448 000
13	To develop and sustain WHO as a flexible, learning organization, enabling it to carry out its mandate more efficiently and effectively	286 105 000
		Effective working budget
		958 840 000
14	Transfer to Tax Equalization Fund	80 000 000
		Total
		1 038 840 000

3. FURTHER RESOLVES that:

(1) notwithstanding the provisions of Financial Regulation 4.3, the Director-General is authorized to make transfers between the appropriation sections of the effective working budget up to an amount not exceeding 10% of the amount appropriated for the section from which the transfer is made; all such transfers shall be reported in the financial report for the financial period 2008–2009; any other transfers required shall be made and reported in accordance with the provisions of Financial Regulation 4.3;

(2) amounts not exceeding the appropriations voted under paragraph 1 shall be available for the payment of obligations incurred during the financial period 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2009 in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Regulations; notwithstanding the provisions of the present paragraph, the Director-General shall limit the obligations to be incurred during the financial period 2008–2009 to sections 1 to 13;

(3) the amount of the contribution to be paid by individual Members shall be reduced by the sum standing to their credit in the Tax Equalization Fund; that reduction shall be adjusted in the case of those Members that require staff members to pay income taxes on their WHO emoluments, taxes which the Organization reimburses to said staff members; the amount of such tax reimbursements is estimated at US\$ 11 284 310 resulting in a total assessment on Members of US\$ 940 124 310;

4. DECIDES:

(1) that the Working Capital Fund shall remain at the level of US\$ 31 000 000, as earlier decided under resolution WHA56.32;

5. NOTES that the expenditure in the programme budget for 2008–2009 to be financed by voluntary contributions is estimated at US\$ 3 268 640 000 as shown below:

	Purpose	Amount US\$
1	To reduce the health, social and economic burden of communicable diseases	808 675 000
2	To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis	657 936 000
3	To prevent and reduce disease, disability and premature death from chronic noncommunicable conditions, mental disorders, violence, injuries and visual impairment	112 889 000
4	To reduce morbidity and mortality and improve health during key stages of life, including pregnancy, childbirth, the neonatal period, childhood and adolescence, and improve sexual and reproductive health and promote active and healthy ageing for all individuals	303 924 000
5	To reduce the health consequences of emergencies, disasters, crises and conflicts, and minimize their social and economic impact	200 782 000
6	To promote health and development, and prevent or reduce risk factors for health conditions associated with use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and other psychoactive substances, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and unsafe sex	122 980 000
7	To address the underlying social and economic determinants of health through policies and programmes that enhance health equity and integrate pro-poor, gender-responsive, and human rights-based approaches	51 478 000
8	To promote a healthier environment, intensify primary prevention and influence public policies in all sectors so as to address the root causes of environmental threats to health	97 720 000
9	To improve nutrition, food safety and food security throughout the life-course and in support of public health and sustainable development	103 880 000
10	To improve health services through better governance, financing, staffing and management, informed by reliable and accessible evidence and research	374 424 000
11	To ensure improved access, quality and use of medical products and technologies	102 789 000

	Purpose	Amount US\$
12	To provide leadership, strengthen governance and foster partnership and collaboration with countries, the United Nations system, and other stakeholders in order to fulfill the mandate of WHO in advancing the global health agenda as set out in the Eleventh General Programme of Work	74 896 000
13	To develop and sustain WHO as a flexible, learning organization, enabling it to carry out its mandate more efficiently and effectively	256 267 000
	Total	3 268 640 000

The draft resolution was approved.¹

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolution on the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013, which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,
 Recalling resolution WHA59.4 on the Eleventh General Programme of Work 2006–2015;
 Recognizing that the Eleventh General Programme of Work sets forth a global health agenda and charts the broad strategic framework and direction for the work of WHO;

Noting that the Medium-term strategic plan provides a flexible multibiennial framework to guide and ensure continuity in the preparation of biennial programme budgets and operational plans over three bienniums in line with the global health agenda established in the Eleventh General Programme of Work;

Acknowledging that more specific priorities are set out in the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013, defined as strategic objectives, and in the two yearly Programme budget, as expected results;

Noting the proposed programme budgets 2010–2011 and 2012–2013 will be submitted to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly and Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly, respectively, for decision;

Welcoming the cross-cutting nature of the strategic objectives that create synergies and promote collaboration between different programmes by capturing the multiple links among determinants of health, health outcomes, health policies, systems and technologies;

Acknowledging that the Medium-term strategic plan, by moving away from narrowly defined areas of work to strategic objectives, provides a more strategic and flexible programme structure that better reflects the needs of countries and regions, and facilitates more effective coordination and collaboration across the Organization and with Member States, organizations of the United Nations system and other stakeholders;

1. ENDORSES the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013;
2. CALLS UPON Member States to identify their role and actions to be taken in order to achieve the strategic objectives contained in the Medium-term strategic plan;

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's second report and adopted as resolution WHA60.12.

3. INVITES concerned organizations of the United Nations system, international development partners, and agencies, international financial institutions, nongovernmental organizations and private-sector entities to consider their contribution in supporting the strategic objectives contained in the Medium-term strategic plan;
4. DECIDES to review the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 every two years in conjunction with the Proposed programme budget with a view to revising the Medium-term strategic plan, including its indicators and targets, as may be necessary;
5. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to use the Medium-term strategic plan in providing strategic direction for the Organization during the period 2008–2013 in order to advance the global health agenda contained in the Eleventh General Programme of Work;
 - (2) to use the Medium-term strategic plan to guide preparation of the three biennial programme budgets 2008–2009, 2010–2011 and 2012–2013 and operational plans through each biennium;
 - (3) to collaborate with concerned organizations of the United Nations system, international development partners, and agencies, international financial institutions, nongovernmental organizations and private-sector entities in implementing the Medium-term strategic plan;
 - (4) to recommend to the Health Assembly through the Executive Board, with the Proposed programme budgets 2010–2011 and 2012–2013, revisions to the Medium-term strategic plan as may be necessary;
 - (5) to report to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly through the Executive Board at its 125th session on implementation of this resolution, and to report biennially thereafter on progress.

The draft resolution was approved.¹

3. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (resumed)

Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm: Item 12.7 of the Agenda (Documents A60/14 and A60/14 Add.1) (resumed)

Dr KAMWI (Namibia) said that his Government regarded the abuse of alcohol as a serious public health concern. Statistics showed that alcohol was the most widely abused substance in Namibia. Most road traffic accidents were caused by drunk driving, particularly during the festive season. At the President's initiative a national policy on alcohol was being finalized. A Coalition on Responsible Drinking had been set up by the Ministry of Health and Social Services, with participants including United Nations organizations, trade and industry, and road traffic authorities. The Coalition was spearheading awareness about responsible drinking, discouraging the advertising of alcoholic beverages during sports events, and broadcasting promotional messages by radio. Alcohol abuse could lead to irresponsible behaviour and the transmission of diseases, including HIV infection. In some towns, there was a hotline which intoxicated drivers could telephone in order to be taken home, rather than driving themselves. He supported the draft resolution.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's second report and adopted as resolution WHA60.11.

Ms TOELUPE (Samoa), supporting the draft resolution, suggested inserting the text “gender responsive” after “balanced” in the twelfth preambular paragraph. The global strategy or plan should reflect policies already adopted at the regional and country levels. She was grateful for the assistance of the Regional Office for the Western Pacific and other partners.

Dr WANGCHUK (Bhutan) said that, in spite of many activities in the countries of the South-East Asia Region, including the adoption of legislation, in response to earlier Health Assembly resolutions on the subject, the harmful use of alcohol continued to have serious consequences for health and an adverse impact on the fabric of society. WHO was providing strategic guidance and was maintaining the momentum on the subject.

Dr ALLEN-YOUNG (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of a working group of member countries of the Caribbean Community, expressed concern at the reference in the draft resolution to the recommendations of the Expert Committee on Problems related to Alcohol Consumption. Those recommendations were not official, and the Technical Report containing them, also referred to, had not been translated or made available to delegations. The Executive Board had not discussed that Report nor had the Secretariat responded to it. The Report should be made available to delegations and be submitted to the Executive Board for discussion at its next session.

Member States should devise strategies to deal with the abuse of alcohol in their countries, including illegal production and sale. Additional evidence on the relationship between alcohol and noncommunicable diseases was also needed as a basis for policy decisions.

The draft resolution submitted by the delegations of New Zealand and Sweden, and subsequently withdrawn, presented a more accurate approach than the remaining draft resolution, which needed changes for accuracy and procedure. She suggested establishing a drafting group in order to produce a better text.

Dr GONZÁLEZ (Cuba) said that his country had introduced a programme of strategies in order to prevent the harmful use of alcohol, aimed at priority groups such as young people and pregnant women. A network of community mental health centres had been set up. Primary health-care institutions were also involved in preventive work and treatment. The family was a major focus of efforts, given its important role in combating excessive alcohol consumption. A postgraduate course in community mental health aimed at family physicians and other health-care workers had been completed by more than 500 professionals. The mass media were also involved in discouraging the excessive use of alcohol. Regulations governing the sale of alcoholic drinks to minors in the vicinity of schools and during festivals had been drawn up. Cuba had undertaken joint activities with Panama, the Dominican Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela through PAHO, and would welcome a broader exchange of experience between countries.

In Cuba's experience, national activities focusing on prevention, health promotion and treatment were the basic tools for preventing the excessive use of alcohol. The most cost-effective methods were those recommended for avoiding noncommunicable diseases, namely, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, health education and community participation. A global plan should recognize national strategies tailored to the specific socioeconomic conditions of each country. Primary health care systems should be given a leading role.

He agreed with the delegate of Jamaica that the reference in the draft resolution to a technical report not available to Member States should be omitted.

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) drew attention to the link between alcohol and the danger of violence, particularly in the family.

Mrs DAVID-ANTOINE (Grenada), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Caribbean Community, said that a commitment to global action on the harmful use of alcohol should be guided by all the evidence available. She supported the proposal to delete the reference, in the third preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, to the recommendations of the Expert Committee on

Problems related to Alcohol Consumption. In the twelfth preambular paragraph, the words “institutional and socioeconomic” should be inserted before “religious”. The draft resolution should include a reference to the risks associated with the illicit production and sale of alcohol. The reference in paragraph 3 to different stakeholders could be misconstrued; it should reflect the wording of resolution WHA58.26. A global strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm would be better than a global plan. She suggested referring the draft resolution to a drafting group for further consideration.

Dr CHITUWO (Zambia), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, said that the proportion of deaths in the Region attributable to harmful use of alcohol was on the rise. People who misused alcohol and drugs were more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours, thereby contributing to the spread of HIV. There was also clear evidence of the harmful effects of alcohol on the unborn child, and of the links with increased domestic violence, road traffic accidents and poverty. He supported the measures being implemented by the Regional Office for Africa, such as capacity building for the prevention, management and treatment of harmful use of alcohol and other psychoactive substances, especially at the community level. Guidelines should be prepared for key stakeholders on the effective implementation of policies and interventions. A global strategy should be formulated on reduction of harmful use of alcohol and substance abuse. A regional network should be established to collect, analyse and disseminate data in order to counter any opposition to such a strategy. Supporting the draft resolution, he proposed adding to the preamble a further paragraph to read, “Recognizing the high association between harmful use of alcohol and HIV infection”.

Mr MENESES (Mexico) said that in Mexico the harmful use of alcohol accounted for 9% of mortality, 60% of traffic accidents, 70% of incidents of domestic violence and a high proportion of morbidity, premature deaths and absenteeism from work and school. He supported the draft resolution, suggesting the addition of a paragraph urging Member States to ensure that regulatory and health promotion activities should involve the private sector in efforts to reduce the harmful use of alcohol. The global strategy should be submitted to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly, rather than the Sixty-second.

Mr HOHMAN (United States of America) said that the discussion on the complex draft resolution, which had appeared in two different versions, had underscored the need to respect the procedure recommended by the Health Assembly that all draft resolutions should be submitted through the Executive Board. It was regrettable that the sponsors of the draft resolution had not followed that procedure, and that the delegates of New Zealand and Sweden had withdrawn their version, since it represented a significant improvement. He requested guidance on how the Chairman proposed to proceed. He wished to propose several amendments, but if an open-ended drafting group was to be established it might be better to submit them to the drafting group first.

Mr SAMO (Federated States of Micronesia) said that harmful use of alcohol represented a threat to public health worldwide and often affected young people. A strategy would have to include community-based interventions targeted towards all the population. He endorsed the views expressed by the delegate of Tonga.

Dr SHRESTHA (Nepal) said that harmful use of alcohol was a major public health problem in Nepal, especially in rural areas and among poor people. More than two thirds of road traffic accidents, and incidents of domestic and street violence were attributable to alcohol use. The various factors involved should be taken into account in a holistic manner, and integrated measures developed. He supported the draft resolution, suggesting that paragraph 3(1) should become paragraph 3(3).

Dr SOLOFONIRINA (Madagascar) said that the harmful use of alcohol was a growing public health problem in Madagascar where 24.5% of the population drank to excess. The advertising of beverages with an alcohol content of more than 1% by volume had been banned, and activities in schools were raising awareness of the risks of tobacco and alcohol use.

Dr MACHAGE (Kenya), speaking as a sponsor of the draft resolution, urged Member States to support it, underlining the principle that only they could determine national policies. He supported the proposal by the delegate of Thailand that the private sector should be confined to policy implementation, not policy formulation. The Director-General had taken a firm stand in refusing to engage with the tobacco industry, and should do likewise in respect of the alcohol industry.

Ms NKURUNZIZA (Burundi) said that Burundi's measures to reduce the harmful use of alcohol included early closing of bars and a ban on selling beer to minors in clubs. She supported the draft resolution, as amended by the delegate of Zambia. Burundi would cooperate with all relevant partners in implementing its provisions. Since the harmful use of alcohol could lead to the spread of communicable diseases, paragraph 3(1) should include a reference to them.

Ms MCCONNEY (Barbados) shared concerns about the manner in which the draft resolution had been submitted. She supported the establishment of an open-ended drafting group. The reference to the recommendations of the Expert Committee should be deleted since the Committee's report had not been circulated. The words "in order to complement existing strategies to prevent and control noncommunicable diseases" in the fifth preambular paragraph should be deleted. In paragraph 3(1) the reference to noncommunicable diseases should be deleted; in paragraph 3(2) "and implementing" should be deleted; in paragraph 3(3) "and commitment free from conflict of interest" should be deleted; and in paragraph 3(4) "plan" should be replaced by "strategy", and "all" should be inserted before "evidence".

Barbados had a code of conduct for the advertising, distribution and sale of alcohol, and sales to and by minors were prohibited. The Ministry of Public Works had led a campaign to promote responsible drinking and driving, and breathalyser tests were planned. Similar campaigns were conducted by other government and nongovernmental organizations.

Mr FRANCIS (Trinidad and Tobago) said that in his country measures to promote behavioural change and reduce the harmful use of alcohol had included increased duties on alcohol, legislation to introduce breathalyser tests and a coherent policy for sponsorship of sporting events.

Turning to the draft resolution, he also regretted the unavailability of the report of the Expert Committee on Problems Related to Alcohol Consumption; it would have provided a valuable contribution to the debate. The report by the Secretariat indicated that further research was needed on the effect of the harmful use of alcohol on health, especially in respect of noncommunicable diseases. He emphasized that the global strategy must take account of national and regional strategies tailored to specific socioeconomic and cultural conditions. All relevant stakeholders should have a say in determining such strategies. He supported the proposal to establish a drafting group.

The meeting rose at 12:20.

EIGHTH MEETING

Friday, 18 May 2007, at 14:40

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm: Item 12.7 of the Agenda (Documents A60/14 and A60/14 Add.1) (continued)

Mr LOPEZ GARCÍA (International Federation of Medical Students' Associations), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that in some regions alcohol accounted for more than 20% of deaths in the 15–29 year age group. Evidence suggested that in many countries alcohol was consumed at an increasingly young age. The harmful use of alcohol placed a heavy burden on society in terms of health care and economic and social costs. Medical students had a duty to combat alcohol abuse and to make people aware of the harmful consequences of excessive alcohol consumption. Combating at once the problems caused by the excessive use of alcohol would create hope for the young people of the future. The aim of the draft resolution was not to prejudice any particular sector or industry, but to reduce mortality and morbidity caused by the harmful use of alcohol. He therefore urged Member States to support the draft resolution.

Dr DANZON (Regional Director for Europe), responding to the comments made by the delegate of Tonga about the existence of several draft resolutions on the same subject, said that the harmful use of alcohol in his Region was as serious a problem as in other regions, if not more so, since it was responsible for more than 60 000 deaths a year, contributing significantly to the Region's burden of noncommunicable diseases. With the aim of preventing or reducing alcohol-related harm, the Regional Committee for Europe had adopted resolution EUR/RC55/1, "Framework for alcohol policy in the WHO European Region" in September 2005. Its text was fully consistent with that of the draft resolution.

Dr LE GALÈS-CAMUS (Assistant Director-General) said that she had noted the interest in the setting up of an information system on local patterns of alcohol consumption, including informal consumption (which was inadequately covered by current systems), and on the impact of harmful use of alcohol on health. The strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm contained in the report were based on the best evidence currently available. Resolution WHA58.26 had also requested the Director-General to draw up recommendations for effective policies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm. An Expert Committee had met in Geneva in October 2006 to examine alcohol-related problems and the Secretariat would submit its report to the Executive Board for consideration at its forthcoming session. The text of that report had been posted on the Organization's web site in English only, but would be published in the other official languages as soon as possible.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Secretariat should prepare a revised draft resolution incorporating the proposed amendments and that a drafting group should be set up that would meet the following day in order to reconcile those amendments. A revised version of the draft resolution would then be circulated for consideration by the Committee subsequently.

Mr HOHMAN (United States of America) said that a drafting group meeting the following morning, Saturday, was not acceptable to his delegation: delegates would need time to consider a text incorporating the various amendments proposed before they were examined by the drafting group. With regard to the Expert Committee's report, it was also unacceptable that the Executive Board should be provided with a report that was available only in English and only on the Internet. He therefore requested that a printed copy be made available and that it include the names of the members of the Expert Committee.

Dr BLOOMFIELD (New Zealand) suggested that, in order to secure the full participation of delegations in the drafting group, the meeting should be held on Monday morning.

Ms BELLO DE KEMPER (Dominican Republic) asked whether it was appropriate to try to reach a consensus on the draft resolution before the Executive Board had considered the Expert Committee's report.

Mr BURCI (Legal Counsel), in reply to the comments made by the delegates of the United States of America and the Dominican Republic, explained that the Executive Board did not consider the reports of expert committees as such, but a report for information by the Director-General on the expert committee meetings held since the Board's previous session, containing his or her observations on the recommendations made and their implications for the Organization's work; the expert committees' recommendations were summarized in that report. Since the publication of expert committees' reports was a lengthy process, the practice had been that the Director-General's report did not wait for the full reports to become available.

Mr HOHMAN (United States of America) asked whether the report available on the Internet in English only was the full report of the Expert Committee or the report of the Director-General, and why the report of the Expert Committee, which had met in October 2006, had still not been made available to Member States in all the official languages.

Dr LE GALÈS-CAMUS (Assistant Director-General) confirmed that the complete text of the Expert Committee's report had been posted on WHO's web site. Because of the lengthy publishing processes involved, including editing and translation, it had not been possible to make several reports available in all languages. However, every effort would be made in order to ensure they were issued as quickly as possible.

Mr LEÓN GONZÁLEZ (Cuba) expressed concern that Member States had not yet been able to consider the Expert Committee's report since it had only recently been made available, and in only one language. He questioned the appropriateness of discussing a subject about which not all the information was to hand.

The CHAIRMAN said that he took it that the Committee agreed that the drafting group should meet on Monday, 21 May 2007.

It was so agreed.

(For continuation of the discussion, see summary record of the fourteenth meeting, section 2.)

Control of leishmaniasis: Item 12.3 of the Agenda (Documents EBSS-EB118/2006/REC/1, resolution EB118.R3 and A60/10) (continued from the third meeting)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the revision of resolution EB118.R3 incorporating amendments proposed by the delegations of Brazil, India, Iraq, Kuwait, Morocco and Thailand which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on control of leishmaniasis;¹

Recognizing that leishmaniasis is one of the most neglected tropical diseases, and that more than 12 million people worldwide are currently infected, with two million new cases each year;

Noting with concern that 350 million people are considered at risk and the number of new cases is on the increase;

Recognizing the lack of accurate information on the epidemiology of the disease for better understanding of the disease and its control;

Noting with concern that the disease affects the poorest populations in 88 countries, placing a heavy economic burden on families, communities and countries, particularly developing countries;

Noting the burden that treatment can place on families;

Bearing in mind that malnutrition and food insecurity are often identified as major causes of disposition to, and severity of, leishmaniasis;

Acknowledging the significant support extended by Member States and other partners and appreciating their continuing cooperation,

1. URGES Member States where leishmaniasis is a substantial public-health problem:
 - (1) to reinforce efforts to set up national control programmes that would draw up guidelines and establish systems for surveillance, data collection and analysis;
 - (2) to strengthen prevention, active detection and treatment of cases of both cutaneous and visceral leishmaniasis in order to decrease the disease burden;
 - (3) to strengthen the capacity of peripheral health centres **to deliver primary and secondary care, [Thailand]** so that they provide appropriate affordable diagnosis and treatment and act as sentinel surveillance sites;
 - (4) to conduct epidemiological assessments in order to map foci, and to calculate the real impact of leishmaniasis through accurate studies of prevalence and incidence, socioeconomic impact and access to prevention and care, and the extent of the disease in those affected by malnutrition and HIV;
 - (5) **to strengthen collaboration between countries that share common foci or disease threats, [Kuwait]** to establish a decentralized structure in areas with major foci of disease, strengthening collaboration between countries that share common foci, increasing the number of WHO collaborating centres for leishmaniasis and giving them a greater role, and relying on initiatives taken by the various actors **and interagency collaboration at national and international levels in all aspects of leishmaniasis control, detection and treatment, with national control programmes encouraging these initiatives with the private sector; [Kuwait]**
 - (6) **to promote the sustainability of surveillance and leishmaniasis control; [Brazil]**
 - (6 bis) **to improve knowledge about, and skills to prevent, leishmaniasis among people in the rural areas, including information on their socioeconomic status; [Thailand]**
 - (7) **to support studies on the surveillance and control of leishmaniasis;**
 - (8) **to share experiences in the development of studies of, and technologies on, the prevention and control of leishmaniasis; [Brazil]**

¹ Document A60/10.

2. FURTHER URGES Member States:
 - (1) to advocate high quality and affordable medicines, and appropriate national drug policies;
 - (2) to encourage research on leishmaniasis control in order:
 - (a) to identify appropriate and effective methods of control of vectors **and reservoirs; [Morocco]**
 - (b) to find alternative safe, effective and affordable medicines for oral, parenteral or topical administration involving shorter treatment cycles, less toxicity, and new drug combinations, and to define appropriate doses and duration of therapy schedules for these medicines;
 - (c) to determine mechanisms to facilitate access to existing control measures, including socioeconomic studies and health-sector reform in some developing countries;
 - (d) to evaluate and improve sensitivity and specificity of serological diagnostic methods for canine and human visceral leishmaniasis, including assessment of standardization and effectiveness;
 - (e) to evaluate effectiveness of alternative control measures such as use of bednets impregnated with long-lasting insecticide;
3. CALLS ON partner bodies to maintain and expand their support for national leishmaniasis prevention and control programmes and, as appropriate, to accelerate research on, and development of, leishmaniasis vaccine;
4. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to raise awareness of the global burden of leishmaniasis, and to promote equitable access to health services for prevention and disease management;
 - (2) to draft guidelines on prevention and management of leishmaniasis, with emphasis on updating the report of WHO's Expert Committee on Leishmaniasis,¹ with a view to elaborating regional plans and fostering the establishment of regional groups of experts;
 - (3) to strengthen collaborative efforts among multisectoral stakeholders, interested organizations and other bodies in order to support the development and implementation of leishmaniasis control programmes;
 - (4) to frame a policy for leishmaniasis control, with the technical support of WHO's Expert Advisory Panel on Leishmaniasis;
 - (5) to promote research pertaining to leishmaniasis control and dissemination of the findings of that research;
 - (6) to monitor progress in the control of leishmaniasis in collaboration with international partners, **WHO regional offices and Member States affected by leishmaniasis; [Thailand]**
 - (7) to report to the Sixty-third World Health Assembly on progress achieved, problems encountered and further actions proposed in the implementation of leishmaniasis control programmes;
 - (8) **to promote action with the major laboratories in order to reduce the costs of medicines to developing countries;**
 - (9) **to promote and support:**
 - (a) **evaluation of the efficacy of new medicines,**
 - (b) **evaluation of dosage and length of treatment for existing medicines, and**
 - (c) **standardization of diagnostic reagents, in particular for visceral leishmaniasis;**

¹ WHO Technical Report Series, 1990, No. 793.

- (10) to facilitate improved coordination among multilateral institutions and international donors concerned with leishmaniasis; [Brazil]**
- (11) to promote and support the development of safe, effective and affordable vaccines, diagnostic tools and medicines with less toxicity for leishmaniasis control. [Thailand]**

Ms JOHRI (India) proposed, in line with her delegation's previous comments, the inclusion of a new paragraph at the end of the preambular part, to read: "Acknowledging that relevant Member States from the South-East Asia Region have committed themselves to collaborate in efforts to eliminate leishmaniasis kala-azar from the Region by 2015".

Dr ASLANYAN (Canada), noting that paragraphs 4(5) and 4(11) were repetitive and made no mention of the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, even though leishmaniasis was one of its 10 focus diseases, proposed, on behalf of Belgium, Denmark, Iran, Norway and Sweden, that they should be combined into a single paragraph 4(5) which would read: "to promote research pertaining to leishmaniasis control, including in the areas of safe, effective and affordable vaccines, diagnostic tools and medicines with less toxicity, and dissemination of the findings of that research, notably through the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases".

Dr SHRESTHA (Nepal) said that leishmaniasis was endemic in 12 Nepalese districts bordering India and that about 5.5 million people were at risk. In 2001–2005, 9084 cases had been reported, but the actual number could be much higher. In 2005, Bangladesh, India and Nepal had signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing themselves to efforts to eliminate leishmaniasis from the region by 2015. His Government was also committed to the regional strategy to eradicate the disease. He therefore supported the draft resolution, with the addition proposed by the delegate of India.

Professor FAIZ (Bangladesh) also expressed support for India's proposal.

Dr PHUSIT PRAKONGSAI (Thailand) supported the amendment proposed by the delegate of Canada. His delegation's proposed amendment, in paragraph 1(6 bis), had not been reflected correctly: the intention was to improve the socioeconomic status of the population in rural areas in order to combat leishmaniasis. He also wondered why that amendment had been numbered (6 bis): did that indicate that a choice must be made between subparagraphs (6) and (6 bis), when their subject matter was completely different?

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General), recapitulating the various proposals, said that the delegate of India had proposed inserting an additional paragraph after the final preambular paragraph of the revised resolution that would read: "Acknowledging that relevant Member States from the South-East Asia Region have committed themselves to collaborate in efforts to eliminate leishmaniasis kala-azar from the Region by 2005". The delegate of Canada had proposed merging paragraphs 4(5) and 4(11) into a new paragraph 4(5), to read: "to promote research pertaining to leishmaniasis control, including in the areas of safe, effective and affordable vaccines, diagnostic tools and medicines with less toxicity, as well as dissemination of the findings of that research, notably through the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases". The delegate of Thailand suggested the following new wording for paragraph 1(6 bis): "to improve knowledge about, and skills to prevent, leishmaniasis among people in rural areas, as well as the socioeconomic status of people in rural areas".

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Poliomyelitis: mechanism for management of potential risks to eradication: Item 12.4 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R1, and A60/11) (continued from the third meeting)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a revision of the draft resolution on poliomyelitis: mechanism for management of potential risks to eradication, incorporating amendments to resolution EB120.R1, proposed by Greece, India, Japan and Thailand, which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,
 Having considered the report on eradication of poliomyelitis;²
 Recalling resolution WHA59.1, urging Member States in which poliomyelitis is endemic to act on their commitment to interrupting transmission of wild poliovirus;
 Recognizing that the occurrence of endemic poliovirus is now restricted to geographically limited areas in four countries;
 Recognizing the need for international consensus on long-term policies to minimize and manage the risks of re-emergence of poliomyelitis in the post-eradication era;
 Recognizing that travellers from areas where poliovirus is still circulating may pose a risk of international spread of the virus;
Noting that the maintenance of high routine immunization coverage in poliomyelitis-free countries contributes to reducing the risk of outbreaks of disease due to wild poliovirus and minimizes the risk of outbreaks due to vaccine-derived poliovirus; [Japan]
 Noting that planning for such international consensus must commence in the near future,

1. URGES all Member States where poliomyelitis is still prevalent **in certain geographical areas, [India]** especially the four countries in which poliomyelitis is endemic:
 - (1) to establish mechanisms to enhance political commitment to, and engagement in, poliomyelitis eradication activities at all levels, and to engage local leadership and members of the remaining poliomyelitis-affected populations in order to ensure full acceptance of, and participation in, poliomyelitis immunization campaigns;
 - (2) to intensify poliomyelitis eradication activities in order rapidly to interrupt all remaining transmission of wild poliovirus;
2. URGES all Member States:
 - ~~(1) to protect against importations and international spread of wild polioviruses by reviewing and, if appropriate, updating national policy to recommend full immunization against poliomyelitis for travellers to areas in which poliovirus is circulating; [India]~~
 - ~~(2) to revise national policy and legislation on immunization of travellers from countries in which poliovirus is circulating in accordance with temporary or standing recommendations that may be established under the International Health Regulations (2005) once they enter into force; [India]~~
 - (1) to review and, if appropriate, update national recommendations on immunization against poliomyelitis in order to reduce the risk of international spread of disease; [India]**
 - ~~(3) to reduce the potential consequences of importation international spread [India]~~
 of wild poliovirus by achieving and maintaining routine immunization coverage against poliomyelitis greater than 90% and, where appropriate, conducting supplementary

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's second report and adopted as resolution WHA60.13.

² Document A60/11.

poliomyelitis immunization activities **through additional campaigns in close collaboration with mass media and involvement of the general public; [Greece]**

(43) to strengthen active surveillance for acute flaccid paralysis in order rapidly to detect any circulating wild poliovirus and prepare for certification of poliomyelitis eradication;

(54) to prepare for the long-term biocontainment of polioviruses by implementing the measures set out under phases 1 and 2 in the current edition of the WHO global action plan for laboratory containment of wild polioviruses;¹

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to continue to provide technical support to the remaining Member States where poliomyelitis is still prevalent in their efforts to interrupt the final chains of transmission of wild poliovirus, and to Member States at high risk of an importation of poliovirus;

(2) to assist in mobilizing financial resources to eradicate poliomyelitis from the remaining areas where poliovirus is circulating, to provide support to countries currently free of poliomyelitis that are at high risk of an importation of poliovirus, and to minimize the risks of re-emergence of poliomyelitis in the post-eradication era;

(3) to continue to work with other organizations of the United Nations system on security issues, through mechanisms such as “days of tranquillity”, in areas where better access is required to reach all children;

(4) **to continue to examine and disseminate measures that Member States can take for reducing the risk and consequences of international spread of polioviruses, including, if and when needed, the consideration of temporary or [India] initiate the process for a potential standing recommendations, under the International Health Regulations (2005), on the immunization against poliomyelitis of travellers from areas where poliovirus is circulating; [India]; if such a recommendation were made, the financial and operational issues arising from its implementation, and lessons drawn, should be reported to the Health Assembly; [Thailand]**

(5) to submit proposals to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly with a view to minimizing the long-term risks of reintroduction of poliovirus or re-emergence of poliomyelitis in the post-eradication era, by establishing international consensus on the long-term use of poliomyelitis vaccines and biocontainment of infectious and potentially infectious poliovirus materials.

The CHAIRMAN said, that in the absence of any objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolution.

The draft resolution, as amended was approved.²

Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning: Item 12.6 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R3, and A60/13) (continued from the sixth meeting)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a revision of the draft resolution on tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning, incorporating amendments to resolution EB120.R3 proposed by Ethiopia, Germany, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, Swaziland and Thailand, which read:

¹ Document WHO/V&B/03.11 (second edition).

² Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s second report and adopted as resolution WHA60.14.

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning;¹

Noting the progress made since 1991 towards achieving the international targets for 2005, and more recently following the establishment, in response to resolution WHA51.13, of the Stop TB Partnership;

Aware of the need to build on this progress and overcome constraints in order to reach the international targets for tuberculosis control for 2015 set by the Stop TB Partnership – in line with the internationally agreed development goal relevant to tuberculosis contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration to “have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of major diseases” – of halving tuberculosis prevalence and death rates by 2015 compared with 1990 levels;

Noting the development of the Stop TB strategy as a comprehensive approach to tuberculosis prevention and control that incorporates the internationally agreed tuberculosis control strategy (DOTS strategy) and represents a significant expansion in the scale and scope of tuberculosis-control activities;

Welcoming the Partnership’s Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015, which sets out the activities oriented towards implementing the Stop TB strategy and achieving the international targets for tuberculosis control for 2015;

Aware of the need to increase the scope, scale and speed of research needed to achieve the international targets for tuberculosis control for 2015 and the goal of eliminating tuberculosis as a global public-health problem by 2050;

Concerned that delays in implementing the Global Plan will result in increasing numbers of tuberculosis cases and deaths, including those due to multidrug-resistant (and extensively drug-resistant) tuberculosis and to the impact of HIV, and therefore in delays in achieving by 2015 the international targets for tuberculosis control and the internationally agreed development goal relevant to tuberculosis contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

Recognizing the importance of the situation and the trends of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis as barriers to the achievement of the Global Plan’s objectives by 2015, and the need for an increased number of Member States participating in the network of the Global Project on Anti-Tuberculosis Drug Resistance Surveillance and for the required additional resources to accomplish its task; [Thailand]

Recalling that resolution WHA58.14 encouraged Member States to fulfil their commitments to ensure the availability of sufficient domestic resources and of sufficient external resources to achieve the internationally agreed development goal relevant to tuberculosis contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

Welcoming the contribution to the mobilization of resources for development by voluntary innovative financing initiatives taken by groups of Member States and, in this regard, noting the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID), the International Finance Facility for Immunisation and the commitment to launch a pilot project within the advance market commitments initiatives, [Germany]

1. URGES all Member States:

(1) to develop and implement long-term plans for tuberculosis prevention and control in line with the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015, in the context of overall health development plans, in collaboration with other programmes (including those on HIV/AIDS, child health and strengthening of health systems), and through national Stop TB partnerships where appropriate, with the aim of:

¹ Document A60/13.

- (a) accelerating progress towards the international targets for tuberculosis control for 2015 through full and rapid implementation of the Stop TB strategy **with specific attention to vulnerable groups highly at risk, such as poor people, migrants and ethnic minorities; [Netherlands]**
- (b) accelerating improvement of health-information systems, **both in general and for tuberculosis in particular, [Japan]** in order to serve the assessment of national programme performance;
- (c) **ensuring high-quality implementation of the DOTS strategy by tuberculosis programmes as the first and foremost step in full implementation of the Stop TB strategy; [Japan]**
- (d) ~~limiting~~ **controlling [Micronesia (Federated States of)]** the emergence and transmission of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis, including extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis, **by ensuring the high-quality implementation of the DOTS strategy and by [Japan]** prompt implementation of infection-control precautions;
- (d bis) if affected, immediately addressing extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis **and HIV-related tuberculosis [Ethiopia]** as part of the overall Stop TB strategy, as the highest health priorities; **[Ethiopia]**
- (e) enhancing laboratory capacity in order to provide for rapid drug-susceptibility testing of isolates obtained from all persons with culture-positive tuberculosis, **where resources are available, [Thailand]** and promote access to quality-assured sputum smear microscopy;
- (f) increasing access to quality-assured second-line medicines at affordable prices through the Stop TB Partnership's Green Light Committee;
- (g) **accelerating collaborative interventions against HIV infection and tuberculosis; [Kenya]**
- (h) **fully involving the private sector in national tuberculosis control programmes; [Swaziland]**
- (2) to use all possible financing mechanisms in order to fulfil the commitments made in resolution WHA58.14, including that to ensure sustainable domestic and external financing, thereby filling the funding gaps identified in the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015;
- (3) to declare, where appropriate, tuberculosis as an emergency and to allocate additional resources in order to strengthen activities aimed at stopping the spread of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to intensify support provided to Member States in expanding implementation of the Stop TB strategy by developing capacity and improving the performance of national tuberculosis-control programmes, particularly the quality of DOTS activities, and by implementing infection-control precautions within the broad context of strengthening health systems in order to achieve the international targets for 2015;
- (1 bis) **to continue to provide support for the network of the Global Project on Anti-Tuberculosis Drug Resistance Surveillance by increasing the number of Member States in the network in order to inform the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015 through determination of the extent and trend of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis; [Thailand]**
- (2) to strengthen urgently WHO's support to countries affected **by multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and especially [Swaziland]** extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis, **particularly where related to HIV; [Ethiopia]**
- (3) to enhance WHO's leadership within the Stop TB Partnership in its coordination of efforts to implement the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015 and to facilitate long-term

commitment to sustainable financing of the Global Plan through improved mechanisms for increased funding;

(4) to strengthen mechanisms to review and monitor estimates of impact of control activities on the tuberculosis burden, including incidence, prevalence and mortality **with specific attention to vulnerable groups highly at risk, such as poor people, migrants and ethnic minorities**; [Netherlands]

(5) to support Member States in developing laboratory capacity to provide for rapid drug-susceptibility testing of isolates obtained from all persons with culture-positive tuberculosis, **to develop consensus guidelines for rapid drug-susceptibility test methods and appropriate measures for laboratory strengthening, and to mobilize funding**; [Thailand]

(6) to enhance WHO's role in tuberculosis research in order to promote the applied research necessary to reach the international targets for tuberculosis control for 2015 and the basic research necessary to achieve the goal of eliminating tuberculosis by 2050; and to increase global support for those areas of tuberculosis research that are currently underresourced, **especially enhancing research and development of new anti-tuberculosis agents and the relevance of nutrition to, and its interaction with, tuberculosis**; [Kuwait]

(7) to report to the Sixty-third World Health Assembly through the Executive Board on:

(a) progress in implementation of the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015, including mobilization of resources from domestic and external sources for its implementation;

(b) progress made in achieving the international targets for tuberculosis control by 2015, using the “proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS)” (Millennium Development Goal indicator 24) as a measure of the performance of national programmes, and tuberculosis incidence and “prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis” (Millennium Development Goal indicator 23) as a measure of the impact of control on the tuberculosis epidemic.

Dr AL-SALEH (Kuwait) said that the amendment proposed by his delegation in paragraph 2(6) would be clearer if the words “new detection, new drugs, and new vaccines” were inserted in brackets after “new anti-tuberculosis agents”.

Dr MESSELE (Ethiopia) said that paragraph 2(2) did not accurately reflect the amendment proposed by Ethiopia and should be revised so that the final phrase read: “and to countries highly affected by HIV-related tuberculosis”.

Mr HOHMAN (United States of America) proposed that the final preambular paragraph should end after the words “Member States”, as there was a risk of not being inclusive if examples of initiatives were listed. Phrases such as that proposed by Thailand, “where resources are available,” in paragraph 1(1)(e), could be inserted in every paragraph of every resolution relating to areas where Member States were asked to take action. That would obviously be counterproductive and he wondered whether Thailand had a specific reason for using that phrase with reference to the enhancement of laboratory capacity.

Dr PHUSIT PRAKONGSAI (Thailand) said that, ideally, every person who had culture-positive tuberculosis should be tested for drug-susceptibility, as long as countries could afford to provide that service.

Mr HOHMAN (United States of America) said that such qualifiers could result in different levels of access to culture testing, thereby limiting the original intent of the subparagraph.

Mr GAUDÊNCIO (Brazil) said that he had a problem with the proposal by the United States to omit references to specific initiatives. Such initiatives had been listed in other resolutions.

Dr ASSOGBA (Benin) said that he had some difficulty with the wording of Thailand's proposal in paragraph 2(5) and he wondered whether there was some difference between the French and English texts.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) recapitulated that the delegate of Kuwait had proposed inserting the words "new detections, new drugs and new vaccines" in paragraph 2(6). The delegate of Ethiopia had proposed adding at the end of paragraph 2(2): "and countries highly affected by HIV-related tuberculosis". The Secretariat would verify whether the French version of paragraph 2(5) corresponded to the other language versions. With regard to the proposal by the United States, he noted that Brazil had expressed concerns about omitting the reference to various initiatives.

Mr HOHMAN (United States of America) stated that the delegate of Brazil had been referring to the draft resolution on malaria control, which did contain a reference to various initiatives. However, no agreement had been reached on that resolution. He therefore suggested leaving the issue open pending a decision on the draft resolution on malaria control.

Mr GAUDÊNCIO (Brazil) supported that suggestion.

Dr NAKATANI (Assistant Director-General) said that, from a technical standpoint, Kuwait's proposal in paragraph 2(6) might more usefully be worded "new diagnostics, drugs and vaccines".

The CHAIRMAN proposed that, in accordance with the proposal by the United States seconded by Brazil, the Committee would return to the resolution at a later stage.

It was so decided.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the tenth meeting, section 2.)

Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy:
Item 12.8 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R17, and A60/15)

Dr LARSEN (Norway) said that the Fifty-seventh World Health Assembly had identified marketing to children as an important issue in the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Diets high in energy, saturated fat, free sugars and salt, and low in certain nutrients were putting children at risk of overweight, obesity and diet-related diseases such as diabetes. Food and beverage marketing to children was extensive in both developed and developing countries. Several recent scientific reviews had raised that issue, as had the WHO Forum and Technical Meeting on the Marketing of Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages to Children (Oslo, 2–5 May 2006), which had recommended that WHO should lead in developing an international code. He therefore suggested that the words "including developing an international code on marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children" should be inserted in paragraph 2(6) of the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R17, between the words "responsible marketing" and "in order to reduce".

Mrs REITENBACH (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, said that the candidate countries, Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, and the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, Iceland, member of the European Free Trade Area and the European Economic Area, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, aligned themselves with her statement. She noted with satisfaction that the prevention and control of

noncommunicable diseases was a priority for WHO. The proposed action plan referred to in the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R17, incorporating clear priorities, actions, a time frame and performance indicators, would encourage implementation of the global strategy. At the 120th session of the Executive Board in January 2007, the Portuguese member speaking on behalf of the European Union had proposed that an outline of the action plan should be submitted to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly as a basis for debate and preparation of a comprehensive plan.¹ The outline contained in the Annex to document A60/15 might have contained more specific proposals, including options for the main areas of focus. A strong plan, which included ways of tackling the main risk factors and health determinants of noncommunicable diseases, should be presented the following year. The plan should also propose guidance on optimizing national health systems and multisectoral collaboration, with special focus on primary health care in order to meet the challenges presented by the global epidemic of noncommunicable diseases.

Dr HAO Yang (China) noted that chronic diseases and poverty were locked in a vicious circle and had a heavy economic impact on many countries. Surveillance, prevention and control in the countries most affected still needed much work, particularly for high-risk populations. Many developing countries were faced with the double burden of noncommunicable and communicable diseases, and limited budgets meant that the prevention and control of infectious diseases were given precedence. In recent years, China had increased its focus on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and would continue that work for the period 2008–2013.

Dr GEORGE (Barbados) said that in the Caribbean chronic noncommunicable diseases accounted for more deaths than HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases combined. Diabetes, hypertension, obesity and cardiovascular disease represented a major disease burden and had serious socioeconomic implications. The Summit of Caribbean Community Heads of Government on Chronic Disease, to be held in Trinidad and Tobago in September 2007, would focus on strengthening health information systems and the implications for economic development, and the growing regional commitment to meeting the public-health challenge of noncommunicable diseases. The Caribbean countries already encouraged food labelling and insisted that imported foods met the highest standards in order to regulate consumption of *trans*-fatty acids, sugars and salt; however, they believed that WHO had a responsibility to support the poorer and smaller island States that were vulnerable under the current trade rules and regulations.

The countries of the Caribbean Community were signatories to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and many were banning smoking in public places. Barbados and the other members of the Caribbean Community supported the draft resolution.

Professor TLOU (Botswana) said that in Botswana the increase in the number of reported cases of noncommunicable diseases had created an extra burden on overworked health systems. A programme for noncommunicable diseases and a national cancer register had been established and efforts were being made to integrate surveillance of other noncommunicable diseases into a well-established disease surveillance and response programme. The Ministry of Health, with relevant stakeholders, was implementing the WHO STEPwise Approach to Chronic Disease Risk Factor Surveillance. A multisectoral plan would be aligned with the global strategy.

There were still challenges, in establishing data on the baseline disease burden and tackling the lack of skilled human resources, and she called on WHO and other partners for technical assistance in those areas. She supported the draft resolution.

Dr AYDINLI (Turkey) said that, although many countries had programmes for tackling noncommunicable diseases, funding remained low. Nationally, the issue of chronic noncommunicable

¹ Document EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/2, summary record of the fourth meeting of the 120th session.

diseases would be incorporated into the strategic plan. Working groups would focus on the risk factors of those diseases, and had the support of several nongovernmental organizations. Turkey had hosted the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Counteracting Obesity (Istanbul, 15–17 November 2006), at which a landmark European Charter on Counteracting Obesity had been signed.

Professor MWAKYUSA (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his country's Adult Morbidity and Mortality Project, launched in the early 1980s, had shown that mortality from diabetes was comparable to rates in Mauritius and the United States of America. The average yearly cost of diabetic patient care was estimated at US\$ 4 million, a huge sum for a poor country. As a result, prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases had been incorporated into health plans, a noncommunicable diseases focal point established, and national guidelines formulated. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control had been ratified, a law regulating tobacco use had been promulgated, and special institutions for cancer, nutrition and diabetes had been set up.

He expressed appreciation for the support received from WHO and other development partners, and urged Member States to adapt their budgets for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases to the burden of disease they represented. He supported the draft resolution.

Mr CHAOUKI (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that noncommunicable diseases accounted for 52% of the disease burden in the Region, a figure that was expected to rise to 60% by 2020. Most of the diseases were the result of lifestyle behaviour and social and economic status; conventional risk factors possibly accounted for 75% of chronic conditions.

Eastern Mediterranean countries were working towards the objectives outlined in the draft resolution through the formulation of strategies at the regional level. They recommended investment in chronic disease management at the national and global levels; setting a global goal to reduce deaths related to chronic noncommunicable diseases by 2% yearly for the next 10 years; adopting advocacy tools for preventive measures; and investing in evidence-based tools for prevention and control.

Dr SCALLY (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) acknowledged the Norwegian amendment of the draft resolution and agreed that WHO could take the lead in developing an international code on the marketing of food and beverages to children in order to restrict the advertising and promotion of foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

The recently announced new and voluntary restrictions in the United Kingdom were expected to prevent children from being overexposed to advertising for less healthy foods in the media. That, coupled with new front-of-pack labelling, was believed to have created a positive environment for healthy food choices and the active promotion of healthy foods for children. In order to assess any change in the nature and balance of food promotion, an interim review of the new voluntary measures would be conducted in the autumn of 2007 and a more detailed review in collaboration with regulators and industry partners in 2008. It would then be decided whether further action, such as legislation, was required.

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran) stated that noncommunicable diseases, including cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory infections, were becoming a significant health problem in his country. The first pilot study on chronic diseases and their risk factors had been initiated in 1998. The Tehran Lipid and Glucose Study was a long-term, community programme to prevent and control noncommunicable diseases by reducing risk factors and developing a healthy lifestyle, involving changes in diet, smoking and physical activity. Three-yearly evaluations were conducted in order to assess the effect of the different changes on the intervention group as compared to the control group. The incidence of noncommunicable diseases due to metabolic influences had decreased significantly in the intervention group.

Furthermore, two large-scale surveillance surveys in 2005 and 2006 had provided information on the major risk factors for planning the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases

countrywide. Those activities were integrated into primary health-care services, together with national workshops for promoting capacity building and generating resources.

His country was increasing political and financial commitment, collaboration and community involvement, and partnerships with the private sector. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr SOLOFONIRINA (Madagascar), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, said that the Health Assembly had recognized that noncommunicable diseases were a major obstacle to development, especially in Africa. Many resolutions had already been passed, drawing attention to the need for global preventive action; the Organization should take the lead in implementing strategies for healthy eating and lifestyles, and cancer prevention. Some 80% of deaths from noncommunicable diseases occurred in developing countries, with Africa bearing the highest levels of morbidity. Through healthy diet, physical activity and limiting alcohol consumption, 80% of cardiovascular cases, 80% of diabetes cases and 40% of cancer cases could be avoided. Violence, injuries and disabilities had also risen significantly in Africa in 2004–2005, with a high number of deaths caused by road accidents in addition to the problems of drug addiction and mental illness.

Many Member States had responded by setting up departments and introducing policies to treat noncommunicable diseases. Twenty-seven African countries had begun to put in place surveillance systems based on the STEPwise approach with support from the Regional Office for Africa. Technical assistance from WHO had included regional workshops, initiatives, exchanges, policies and guidelines. The creation of online tools such as WHO's Global InfoBase had allowed access to information from some 11 000 surveys.

Preventive action had focused on risk-reduction factors such as unhealthy diet, tobacco use, sedentary lifestyles and excessive consumption of alcohol. WHO had assisted in developing technical tools to create a strategic framework for prevention and treatment of high-risk populations. Africa faced significant challenges in combating both communicable and noncommunicable diseases with limited resources. Noncommunicable diseases had also to be covered by surveillance networks. Failing decisive and concerted action, the scale of the problem would become overwhelming. Noncommunicable diseases were no longer confined to developed countries, but threatened Africa too. She called on all Member States to support the draft resolution.

Mr KESSLER (Switzerland) welcomed the draft resolution without amendment. In regard to the proposal to draft an international code of conduct for marketing of food and non-alcoholic drinks to children, that was a domain best regulated at national level. Drafting an international code would take a disproportionate amount of the Secretariat's time as against the results it would achieve. Time would be better spent learning from current experiments before any conclusions were drawn. He was therefore unable to agree to the proposed amendment although, in a spirit of compromise, he could agree to a submission of best practices and recommendations to Member States for their consideration.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that noncommunicable diseases constituted a great threat to health in terms of death and disability, and an economic burden on health facilities. A nationwide study in 2006 had shown that more than 60% of Iraqis were overweight or obese, 40% suffered from hypertension, 10% had diabetes, more than 30% had high cholesterol levels and more than 20% smoked. Integrated care of noncommunicable diseases in Iraq at the primary health-care level should be strengthened; screening systems for hypertension and diabetes, and integrated eye care in order to detect cataracts and glaucoma should also be part of primary health-care services. Development of a national surveillance system for noncommunicable diseases and their contributory risk factors was recommended. Promoting healthy lifestyles should be enhanced and national guidelines established. Tobacco control activities needed to be upgraded in Iraq and the referral and feedback between different levels of care strengthened. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr UGRID MILINTANGKUL (Thailand) appreciated the draft resolution as it broadened the strategies used to control noncommunicable diseases. Thailand had already initiated a financing

mechanism with revenue from a 2% excise on alcohol and tobacco tax being channelled to the Health Promotion Foundation whose primary goal was to reduce risks and promote healthy activities. A recent campaign had, for example, encouraged children to cut their sugar consumption. Thailand had adopted a policy to limit the marketing of chemicals used in agricultural products.

In order to meet the target of reducing death rates from noncommunicable diseases, the death registration process should be amplified to ensure full and reliable reporting. Thus, the thirteenth preambular paragraph, beginning “Recognizing that greater efforts are required”, should emphasize the importance of restricting marketing activities and of providing consumers with clear, precise and relevant information. In paragraph 1(5), the harmful use of alcohol consumption in addition to tobacco should be mentioned. In the second preambular paragraph after the reference to resolution WHA53.17, a reference to “WHA54.18 on Transparency in tobacco control process” should be inserted.

Mr DANKOKO (Senegal) said that noncommunicable diseases were increasingly prevalent in Senegal, causing disability, poverty and death and threatening the country’s economy and social well-being. Focal points had been established in order to control specific noncommunicable diseases, each with a multidisciplinary committee responsible for devising a control programme. Centres providing specialized care, including cancer and renal units, were planned. A diabetes control centre had already been set up. The measures would bring health care closer to people and reduce treatment costs, which most households could not afford. He emphasized prevention, which was integrated into all the country’s disease control programmes. He supported the draft resolution.

Professor KEVAU (Papua New Guinea) said that his country’s experience of noncommunicable diseases went back only some three decades, yet they had already claimed the lives of many people in the prime of life. Papua New Guinea ranked second among the Pacific island countries in regard to prevalence of diabetes, while strokes, coronary heart disease, hypertension and dyslipidaemia were increasing. The country had a doctor-to-population ratio of 1:15 000 and a high prevalence of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Therefore, the emergence of noncommunicable diseases posed a significant public health problem owing to the lack of laboratories and acute care medication.

He acknowledged WHO’s lead in drawing attention to noncommunicable diseases, and its efforts in promoting evidence-based advocacy, surveillance tools, population-based prevention methods and guidelines on prevention and management of high-risk populations; and the Organization’s work in identifying the challenges in its Proposed programme of work and draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013. He supported the draft resolution.

Mr GAUDÊNCIO (Brazil) supported the proposals contained in resolution EB120.R17, especially those for more investment in prevention and control. The measures were highly relevant given the significant threat posed by noncommunicable diseases. Efforts should focus on monitoring diseases and their risk factors, education, developing guidance policies and supporting health promotion, prevention and control activities. He supported the amendment proposed by the delegate of Norway.

Dr SUGIURA (Japan) supported the draft resolution, but noted that paragraphs 1(6) and 1(8) both emphasized the relationship between noncommunicable diseases and primary health care. In order to avoid overlap, he proposed that they should be combined, with appropriate modification. Bearing in mind that medicines were not the only measure for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, he suggested that paragraph 1(10) should be amended to read: “to increase access to appropriate health care, including medicines, for high-risk populations in low- and middle-income countries”. In paragraph 2(6), the words “and healthy eating habits” should be inserted after “promoting healthy diets”.

Dr DUQUE III (Philippines) fully supported the draft resolution and reiterated his Government’s commitment to the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases through integrated risk management, promotion of healthy lifestyles and behaviour modification, with 2005–2015 proclaimed

the decade of healthy lifestyle in the Philippines. He recommended amending paragraph 1(2) to include “and local coalition” after “national coordinating mechanism”, and that “low-price, quality” should be inserted before “medicines” in paragraph 1(10).

He also recommended the adoption of a treaty similar to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control aimed at tackling consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages; increasing the availability of healthy foods; promoting healthy diets and encouraging responsible marketing in order to reduce the impact of foods high in saturated fats, *trans*-fatty acids, free sugars and salt.

Dr GOPEE (Mauritius) supported the draft resolution, in particular the request to the Director-General to prepare an action plan for submission to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly. Noncommunicable diseases were a serious problem in Mauritius, accounting for over 80% of deaths, with diabetes a particular concern. Mauritius ranked third in the world in terms of diabetes prevalence, with 1 in 5 adults over 30 years of age and 1 in 2 over 50 years of age suffering from the disease. A national service framework aimed at improving prevention of and care for diabetes at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels had been prepared together with three national action plans – on tobacco control, nutrition, and cancer prevention and control; an action plan on physical activity was also being finalized. Mauritius offered screening for noncommunicable diseases at workplaces and educational institutions. He appealed to WHO and other international partners to continue assisting Mauritius, an economically fragile small-island developing State.

Dr PANTELEEVA (Russian Federation) acknowledged the progress made in implementing WHO’s global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. Her country was working towards the strategy’s global targets, which should be further developed using the results of research and new technologies, balancing prevention and improved diagnosis and treatment. Under the Biennial Collaborative Agreement with the Regional Office for Europe for 2006–2007, Russia was developing a national strategy on noncommunicable diseases, based on existing documents and many years of experience, including initiatives such as the 20-year Countrywide Integrated Noncommunicable Diseases Intervention programme. Owing to lack of funding work had halted, as it had under the WHO Mega Country Health Promotion Network.

She proposed inserting a new paragraph in the draft resolution, worded:

to develop mechanisms of interaction of Member States in preventing and controlling noncommunicable diseases; in particular, to recognize as an effective means of cooperation and implementation of the Global Strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases the regional and global network programmes for such prevention and control; to support their development through coordination, organization and funding at the regional and global levels.

Mr SAMO (Federated States of Micronesia) supported the global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, in particular through attention to their risk factors. Micronesia had adopted integrated management as its main strategy, but risk factors such as obesity and hypertension remained prevalent. He supported the draft resolution.

Mr MSELEKU (South Africa) supported the amendment proposed by the delegate of Norway concerning an international code on marketing of foods and beverages to children. Advertising of food products had to be accurate and age-appropriate. South Africa was developing strategies to promote healthy lifestyles, which included working with the food industry to encourage the production and marketing of healthy foods.

Dr GONZÁLEZ (Cuba) highlighted the link between chronic noncommunicable diseases and population ageing. The battle against such diseases had to begin early in life. Instilling healthy habits during childhood and adolescence was effective in preventing noncommunicable diseases in adulthood and ensuring a long and healthy life. Cuba’s Health and Quality of Life Programme addressed noncommunicable diseases and other causes of death, disability and demand for specialized services

through integrated action. Disease prevention and health promotion, with special emphasis on primary health care, were employed as part of an integrated health system that addressed the double burden of infectious and noncommunicable diseases. He supported the draft resolution.

Mr ROSALES (Argentina) said that noncommunicable diseases should continue to be prioritized by the Secretariat and all Member States. Despite the progress noted in the report, the resources allocated for prevention and control of chronic noncommunicable diseases remained insufficient and surveillance systems needed to be improved. Systematization of international experiences might prove extremely useful. It might also be helpful to complement the progress report on implementation of the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health with recommendations on concrete interventions, their feasibility and potential impact. The draft plan of action might be strengthened through greater emphasis on regional integration. Interventions should be based on the best available evidence, with greater systematization of experiences; increased availability of tools for countries that were in the early stages of dealing with noncommunicable diseases; and greater emphasis on the role of evidence, cost-effectiveness and surveillance in prioritization and decision making.

Professor WYSOCKI (Poland) said that the report rightly stressed evidence-based advocacy, surveillance and population-based prevention. Health promotion programmes and techniques could also reduce the death and disease burden from noncommunicable diseases in high-risk populations. However, health promotion was not explicitly mentioned in the report or the draft resolution. He therefore proposed that the words “health promotion” should be inserted in paragraph 2(2) following the words “surveillance mechanisms”. He also supported the amendment proposed by the delegate of Norway.

Dr AL-SAIF (Kuwait) said that in Kuwait specialized committees had been established for individual diseases. Work on cancer, diabetes and obesity-related disorders was being expanded. The various committees were also engaged in raising awareness of the dangers associated with certain products and encouraging people to undergo screening for particular conditions, which was provided free at clinics around the country. He supported the draft resolution.

Mr SOK Yong Guk (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) said that, with expected mortality and morbidity rates of 60% and 73% respectively by 2020, noncommunicable diseases posed a significant problem, particularly in developing countries. WHO’s STEPwise approach to surveillance, linked to the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and the South-East Asia Region’s strategy on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, were together a powerful tool. Identifying and managing the risk factors common to the most widespread noncommunicable diseases was the most cost-effective way of tackling the problem. His country had carried out various prevention and control activities and introduced the STEPwise approach, with survey findings used to formulate public health policies. It was important to adapt the STEPwise approach to each country’s situation, and to collect and use the information obtained.

Mr MENESES (Mexico) drew attention to the high prevalence of obesity and diabetes mellitus among adults and to the growing prevalence of overweight children under five years of age in the world. He proposed a new subparagraph in paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, urging Member States to incorporate into their national health programmes intervention strategies aimed at reducing the incidence of obesity in children and adults and preventing and controlling diabetes mellitus. He also proposed a new subparagraph in paragraph 2, requesting the Director-General to promote dialogue among Member States with a view to developing a global strategy to combat obesity and diabetes mellitus.

Ms TOELUPE (Samoa) said that her country, as one of the many receiving assistance from WHO and development partners to tackle noncommunicable diseases, demonstrated political

commitment in support of promotion and prevention programmes, particularly in the light of the shocking results of a survey conducted as part of the STEPwise approach.

She expressed confidence that, with the help of the Regional Office for the Western Pacific and other partners, more stringency would be exercised in the practical application of global and regional strategies, including the promotion and implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Health reforms had been encouraging stronger engagement of sectoral groups in the implementation of the national strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. She supported the draft resolution, while agreeing with the delegate of Poland that health promotion should be highlighted.

Professor FAIZ (Bangladesh) noted that various studies in Bangladesh had revealed that noncommunicable diseases were the cause of 30% of hospital admissions in the country. Bangladesh faced a double burden of communicable and noncommunicable diseases. Certain factors were peculiar to Bangladesh, such as the high proportion of carbohydrates in the diet and the consumption of smokeless tobacco (the latter having recently been made punishable by law). No single measure could prevent noncommunicable diseases. The absence in middle- and low-income countries of optimal facilities for treating noncommunicable diseases made preventive measures all the more important. His Government's strategic plan of action for surveillance and prevention, taking account of diet and physical activity, would require much support.

Professor PEREIRA MIGUEL (Portugal), supporting the draft resolution as amended by the delegate of Poland to highlight health promotion, said that the global epidemic of noncommunicable diseases affected all population groups but particularly the underprivileged and vulnerable, such as migrants, thereby contributing to inequity. The growing impact of such diseases on development should be tackled and efforts should be scaled up, among other means through full implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and support for the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

Cross-cutting approaches were important for tackling the causes of noncommunicable diseases, which were mainly related to lifestyle. Portugal sought "health in all policies", following one of the three pillars of the future European Union health strategy. Inspired by the European Ministerial Conference on Counteracting Obesity (Istanbul, Turkey, 15–17 November 2006), the Minister of Health had established a programme to counteract obesity, based on public–private partnership. He hoped that the programme would yield significant results.

Ms PANTAZOPOULOU (Greece) said that globalization had affected lifestyles, increasing the prevalence of some noncommunicable diseases to the point where they could be considered communicable diseases. In Europe, noncommunicable diseases represented 77% of the disease burden, in terms of disability-adjusted life years. In addition to the commonly cited diseases, musculoskeletal disorders should also be borne in mind.

With regard to the draft resolution, she proposed the addition of a new final preambular paragraph, to read: "Recognizing the heavy social and economic burden of musculoskeletal disorders, especially among the workforce and the elderly". She further proposed that the words "to strengthen capacity of health systems for prevention" should be inserted at the beginning of paragraph 1(6).

Dr YEARWOOD (Trinidad and Tobago) described the high morbidity and mortality rates for noncommunicable diseases in her country, particularly cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, hypertension and cerebrovascular diseases. Measures taken included a health promotion plan for healthy lifestyles; a national policy for the prevention and control of chronic noncommunicable diseases, based on integrated management, health promotion, standardized guidelines and protocols, community empowerment and intersectoral collaboration; a chronic disease assistance programme for the control of diabetes and hypertension, with medications provided to patients free of charge; and a National Oncology Programme for reducing the number of deaths from cancer, and improving the quality of life of patients. The National Oncology Centre would serve as the focal point for cancer

treatment within the Caribbean region; and a tobacco control bill was before a legislative review committee, with taxation on tobacco products already increased.

Curbing chronic noncommunicable diseases enjoyed strong support at the highest level; in September 2006, a national consultation had been convened under the direct patronage of the Prime Minister, and later expanded to a regional Heads of Government conference. She supported the draft resolution.

Dr GARGOURI (Jordan) said that Jordan was seeing a change in the pattern of diseases, with communicable diseases having been stabilized but more patients suffering from chronic conditions. Studies indicated that risk factors, especially smoking, were on the increase, as was the incidence of diabetes. Anti-smoking policies were in place and people were being encouraged to take physical exercise. Funds from the regular budget of the Ministry of Health had been earmarked for the control of noncommunicable diseases. Noting that all countries were seeing a rise in noncommunicable disease rates, she stressed the importance of dealing with the issue.

Dr SHRESTHA (Nepal) said that chronic noncommunicable diseases, which accounted for 60% of deaths in Nepal, were on the increase. A survey in accordance with WHO's STEPwise approach had been conducted in three districts in 2005, revealing a high prevalence of risk factors, such as alcohol and tobacco use, physical inactivity, low fruit and vegetable intake, obesity and hypertension. A national survey of risk factors was under way. From the survey's findings, community-based interventions, integrated into the general health system, were being planned. A focal point for noncommunicable diseases had been designated within the Ministry of Health, and national policies and strategies were being finalized. Anti-tobacco legislation was being drafted, in line with Nepal's ratification of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. He supported the draft resolution, as amended by the delegate of Japan.

Mr BENKACI (Algeria) suggested the establishment of a computerized surveillance system for noncommunicable diseases with support from WHO, particularly in the area of standardization of the corresponding information system. That would enable effective prevention and control strategies to be put in place. Algeria had its own programme on noncommunicable diseases, with additional national programmes on specific conditions such as cancer and hearing impairment. It had also set up centres in all regions for treating and monitoring diabetes patients, collecting biological data, providing health education and ensuring faster access to specialized medical care, particularly in ophthalmology and cardiology.

(For continuation of the discussion, see summary record of the ninth meeting, section 2.)

The meeting rose at 17:30.

NINTH MEETING

Saturday, 19 May 2007, at 09:00

Chairman: Dr A. BALBISI (Jordan)

1. SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE A (Document A60/56)

Mrs BU FIGUEROA (Honduras), Rapporteur, read out the draft second report of Committee A.

The report was adopted.¹

2. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy: Item 12.8 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006-EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R17, and A60/15) (continued from the eighth meeting)

Dr BLOOMFIELD (New Zealand) welcomed WHO's adoption of a range of policy approaches, backed by a strong evidence base, to noncommunicable diseases. Action must be well integrated into health care systems and primary health care, and must seek to influence the environment in which people lived. In his own country, the food industry and the media were contributing to efforts to reduce obesity levels. He supported the amendment by the delegate of Norway to the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R17.

Dr ASLANYAN (Canada) strongly supported the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Canada would provide technical support and share its expertise with the Secretariat and Member States, particularly through the WHO Collaborating Centre on Non Communicable Disease Policy, based at the Public Health Agency of Canada. The links between related resolutions on noncommunicable diseases should be strengthened, in order to bring about a comprehensive approach to prevention and control.

Mr HOHMAN (United States of America) expressed his surprise that the delegation of Norway had proposed such a radical amendment to a resolution already approved by the Executive Board; the proposed international code of marketing would apply to thousands of products, and the work involved in developing and monitoring such a code would have enormous resource implications for WHO. Moreover, the amendment had been submitted with little prior consultation. He had no instructions from his Government on the matter, so could not support the proposed amendment.

Mr JØRGENSEN (Denmark) recalled that his delegation had first brought the issue of marketing of foods to children to the Executive Board. He fully supported the draft resolution; a strong form of words should be adopted in order to pave the way for a future plan of action.

¹ See page 310.

Dr JUNG Tong-ryoung (Republic of Korea) said that his Government had strengthened monitoring and evaluation to support evidence-based decision-making. National surveillance of noncommunicable diseases and their risk factors had been carried out every three years since 1995, with national health goals to be achieved by 2010. It had also implemented a 10-year cancer control plan and a comprehensive plan for the prevention of cardiovascular disease and stroke. He supported the draft resolution, with the amendments proposed by the delegate of Japan.

Mr SANNE (Norway) revised his delegation's amendment to the draft resolution by substituting the words "a set of recommendations" for "an international code".

Ms ALLAIN (Consumers International), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, urged Member States to support the development of an international code of marketing of foods to children, as part of a broader strategy to prevent noncommunicable diseases and implement the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. At least 2.6 million people died every year as a result of being obese or overweight, and about 22 million children under five years of age were already overweight.

One of the issues identified for action in the Global Strategy was food marketing, advertising, sponsorship and promotion. The WHO Forum and Technical Meeting on Marketing of Food and Non-alcoholic Beverages to Children (Oslo, 2–5 May 2006) had concluded that exposure to commercial promotion of energy-dense, micronutrient-poor foods and beverages could adversely affect children's nutritional status. Children were influenced by commercial promotion, which undermined recommendations for a healthy diet and had a harmful effect on children's food knowledge, attitudes, purchasing behaviour and consumption. The techniques used to target children included television advertising, the Internet, sponsorship and commercial activities in schools.

International action was needed in order to ensure a more responsible approach to food marketing to children around the world. Action at the national or regional level alone would create inconsistencies, and result in marketing activity shifting to the areas with the fewest controls where consumers were most vulnerable. WHO should develop an international code on marketing of foods to children, as originally proposed by the delegate of Norway. She also supported the suggestion by the delegate of the Philippines for an international treaty on the marketing of foods to children.

Ms LINNECAR (International Lactation Consultant Association), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, and on behalf of the International Baby Food Action Network and Churches Action for Health, said that evidence showed that, among many other benefits for children, breastfeeding reduced neonatal mortality by 22% and mortality among under-fives by 13%. It also reduced the risk later in life of cardiovascular disease and celiac and inflammatory bowel disease and resulted in lower cholesterol levels. For mothers, it reduced the risk for mothers of developing breast cancer, ovarian cancer, osteoporosis and diabetes.

Despite such evidence, however, breastfeeding was not always seen as the key element in reducing the incidence of noncommunicable diseases. It did not always appear on the list of suggested interventions for that purpose, and parents and health professionals were continually misinformed. The problem was exacerbated by marketing practices that violated the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.

The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, endorsed in resolution WHA55.25, established guiding principles for the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding. Exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond gave the best possible start for a healthy life. It was imperative to take that into account when planning for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases.

She welcomed the proposal for an international code on the marketing of food and beverages to children, and recommended introducing a binding instrument to ensure that the code would be followed.

Ms STERKEN (International Association for the Study of Obesity), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that obesity and related noncommunicable diseases threatened the health of increasing numbers of children and adults worldwide, in developed and developing countries. Obesity had increased the burden of preventable chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Children were the target of marketing strategies that promoted diets high in fat, sugar and salt. Such techniques undermined the global nutrition strategies endorsed by the Health Assembly. The level of concern over marketing to children was reflected in the consultations convened by WHO on the subject, and by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on World Food Security and the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition. A legacy of poverty affected a large proportion of the world's children, who were vulnerable to obesity and related disorders when exposed to westernized diets. Children needed international standards and protection from commercial practices that promoted unhealthy consumption patterns and hindered the efforts of parents, governments and society to improve children's diets. She fully supported the proposal by the delegate of Norway for an international code of marketing. It should establish global standards for all promotional activities affecting children, including marketing through the Internet and mobile communications.

She called on the food, beverage, media and advertising industries to support an international code; and to promote healthy nutritional standards by helping to reduce consumption of products with a high fat, salt or sugar content. If the trend in obesity was to be reversed in line with the goal set by European health ministers in November 2006, much more effort was needed. The prevention and control of chronic diseases should begin with protecting children.

Dr LHOTSKA (Corporate Accountability International), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, commended the inclusion in the draft resolution of several references to avoiding potential conflicts of interest. The commitment to protect public health policy from industry interference had been clearly established in resolution WHA54.18 and Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Transnational tobacco companies were attempting to undermine national health policies and implementation of the Convention worldwide. The Network for Accountability of Tobacco Transnationals would continue to monitor those tactics and would expose them at the second Conference of the Parties (Bangkok, 30 June–6 July 2007).

The interests of the food industry could also conflict with public health objectives. Resolution WHA57.17 recognized the need to avoid potential conflicts of interest in implementing the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Nongovernmental organizations were important in revealing industry influence and activities, and in calling for transparency in health policies. Policies for healthy nutrition should include enforceable limits on the marketing of unhealthy foods.

She supported the draft plan of action outlined in the report and the draft resolution as amended by the delegations of Norway and Thailand. The Secretariat and WHO's Member States should ensure that the plan of action included strong, clear guidelines on avoiding potential conflicts of interest.

Dr LE GALÈS-CAMUS (Assistant Director-General) noted the importance attached by several Member States to coordinating the implementation of strategies on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases previously approved by the Health Assembly. That was particularly relevant to primary prevention, tobacco use, and risk factors linked to diet and lack of physical exercise. The strategies would be coordinated through synergies, and by focusing on relevant multisectoral approaches. She also noted the emphasis placed by the Member States on strengthening primary health-care systems in order to equip them better for integrating the prevention and treatment of noncommunicable diseases.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that further consideration of agenda item 12.8 should be deferred pending a revision of the draft resolution.

It was so agreed.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the twelfth meeting, section 2.)

Oral health: action plan for promotion and integrated disease prevention: Item 12.9 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006-EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R5, and A60/16)

Dr ANTEZANA ARANÍBAR (representative of the Executive Board) said that the Executive Board had discussed principles for strengthening work on oral health at country, regional and global levels. The Board had adopted resolution EB120.R5 which recommended a draft resolution that emphasized integrating the prevention of oral diseases into the prevention of chronic diseases, taking the common risk factors into account. It had also drawn attention to the need for building capacity in health systems at national, regional and global levels.

Dr SOLOFONIRINA (Madagascar), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that poor oral health was a major public health problem in Africa. It was inseparable from general health, as stated in the Nairobi Declaration on Oral Health in Africa (2004). Several infections and diseases, such as HIV/AIDS and diabetes, had oral manifestations. Periodontal disease was also a serious problem. Maxillo-facial injuries resulting from traffic accidents and oral cancers due to excessive alcohol and tobacco consumption had become familiar problems. Noma also occurred among young children in many African countries.

Reliable epidemiological data were needed in order to plan oral health-care provision. Africa lacked qualified staff and equipment. The Regional Office for Africa emphasized prevention, and oral health was being integrated into school, maternal and child health-care programmes. Thirty-three African countries had oral health policies, but they were poorly implemented for lack of funds.

She supported the draft resolution. Governments should implement national oral health programmes, coordinated through a focal point in the health ministries in all the Region's countries. Oral health should be incorporated into primary health care, in order to eliminate inequalities between population groups.

She requested a technical note on the rise in reported cases of noma for the forthcoming Regional Committee meeting, preparatory to the drawing up of a regional strategy for the eradication of noma. Oral health should be included in programmes for the prevention of noncommunicable diseases, and integrated into the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013.

Ms KOIVISTO (Finland) said that oral diseases were among the most common chronic diseases. Tobacco, particularly when used in combination with alcohol, was a risk factor for oral cancer, the eighth most common cancer worldwide. The increased incidence of smoking among young people would affect the oral health of future generations. The oral health of lower social groups had been slow to improve. More emphasis should be placed on integrating oral health into health promotion strategies. Reducing exposure to risk factors was a major element in the global strategy for the prevention and control of chronic noncommunicable diseases. Why were sweet dispensers being installed at schools at a time when dental decay among children was increasing? Awareness of the determinants of oral and general health should be raised, and preventive health care promoted. WHO had to encourage and promote healthy alternatives and lifestyles. She endorsed the draft resolution.

Dr TAKAHASHI (Japan) welcomed WHO's acknowledgement of the intrinsic link between oral health, general health and quality of life. The challenge of oral health, such as care of HIV/AIDS patients or the management of noma, had shown the need for coordination among poverty reduction, nutrition management and infectious disease control. Community personnel should be deployed for

prevention, for example in promoting oral care in schools. WHO should continue to provide a forum for Member States to exchange experience.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) said that dental caries was the single most common chronic childhood disease, and could affect a child's ability to learn and develop. In the United States of America, poor children suffered from dental caries twice as much as their more affluent peers, with less chance of having it treated. More than 51 million school hours were lost each year to dental-related illness in children, together with over 164 million hours of work by adults because of dental disease or dental visits. Good oral hygiene therefore made sound sense for socioeconomic reasons. Oral health was a key component of the Health Secretary's strategy for health diplomacy in Central America, with dental and preventive care provided by commissioned United States' public health officers and military, medical, and humanitarian personnel, and through planned collaboration with government-funded nongovernmental organizations.

He welcomed the efforts to provide Member States with evidence and information to integrated oral health into broader national health systems and programmes. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that progress had been made in Iraq in oral health, which had become an integral part of primary health-care programmes. However, access to oral health services was limited and teeth were often left untreated or extracted. Many people saw tooth loss as a natural consequence of ageing, and the proportion of edentulous adults aged 65 years and older remained high in many countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. He supported the draft resolution, but drew attention to the importance of investment by WHO of more financial and human resources in oral health promotion; strengthening surveillance of oral health diseases; bringing oral health under primary health-care activities at all levels; and raising community awareness about oral health.

Mr VOLJČ (Slovenia) agreed that oral health promotion and disease prevention remained an isolated component of national health programmes, even in high-income countries. The importance of oral health would grow with increasing care for disadvantaged populations and the ageing of societies. Oral health should remain at the centre of WHO's activities. He supported the draft resolution. Slovenia would support WHO's activities.

Dr SOPIDA CHAVANICHKUL (Thailand) fully supported the streamlining of national oral health-care policies through primary health-care services. She endorsed the suggestion by the delegate of Madagascar to incorporate oral health in the Medium-term strategic plan, and supported the draft resolution.

Dr DEMIRALP (Turkey) said that oral diseases as a group were the fourth most expensive to treat but were preventable. Since most oral and chronic diseases had common risk factors, noncommunicable disease prevention programmes should include oral disease. Turkey was about to implement a preventive education programme for 6.5 million primary school pupils, and their teachers and families, under which toothbrushes and toothpaste would be distributed to the pupils free of charge. Turkey's integrated oral-health surveillance system was based on the WHO Global InfoBase and WHO's STEPwise surveillance methods. He welcomed WHO's collaboration with nongovernmental organizations. Turkey supported WHO's efforts to have oral health strategies and policies included in national and community health programmes.

Dr MAZHANI (Botswana) welcomed WHO's technical support in developing communication and advocacy tools. Botswana had established programmes for oral health promotion in primary schools, and was procuring four mobile dental clinics for rural communities. A national oral health policy that took account of common risk factors for oral diseases and noncommunicable diseases was under development. He supported the draft resolution.

Mrs PINTO FERNÁNDEZ (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that some 20 million people nationally had received dental care since 2004. A strategy had been put in place to help the many people in the country who had lost teeth by providing them with dental prostheses. A factory to manufacture dental prostheses using material derived from petrochemicals was being considered. The Ministry of Health was continuing its salt fluoridation programme, education and training activities, and epidemiological monitoring.

Mr SAMO (Federated States of Micronesia) supported the draft resolution but proposed that paragraph 2(1) should be amended by inserting the words “and unique” after “specific” and by replacing “low-income” with “low- and middle-income” to reflect the information provided in the report. His Government would implement the resolution with support from development partners.

Dr ASLANYAN (Canada) said that, since the two most common oral diseases, dental decay and gum disease, were almost entirely preventable, WHO’s focus on a health promotion, disease prevention and wellness model was to be commended. Oral diseases tended to be chronic, and the identification and reduction of chronic disease risk factors would improve oral health. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr MAOATE (Cook Islands) said that oral health activities had been incorporated in the Cook Islands’ 2006 national health strategy and included workforce development. He supported the draft resolution as amended by the delegate of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr PETTERSSON (Sweden) supported the draft resolution. Oral health was a crude indicator of general health status and inequalities in health. The retention of teeth throughout life contributed to autonomy and quality of life. The role of dental systems in disease prevention should be strengthened. Dental staff could urge patients to give up smoking, promote improved diet and eating habits, and advocate for healthy environments in education facilities. However, increasingly expensive dental services were leading vulnerable people to drop out of regular dental care. Those factors should be taken into consideration when the resolution was implemented.

Dr MACHAGE (Kenya) proposed that the draft resolution should be amplified by amending paragraph 1(13), replacing “to consider increasing” with “to increase, as appropriate”, and by adding at the end of paragraph 2(5) “including increasing budgetary and human resources at all levels”.

Dr SALANIPONI (Malawi) said that oral disease, especially dental caries in children and oral Kaposi sarcoma associated with AIDS, was increasing in Malawi and was exacerbated by poverty and poor social conditions and dietary habits. Malawi was therefore carrying out an oral health action plan, with decentralization of oral health to first-level health facilities, and provision of oral health education in primary schools. Challenges included a lack of awareness of the importance of oral health. Given the shortage of qualified dental surgeons in the country, training was being given to dental therapists, who would provide services in clinics, and a dental school was planned. He supported the draft resolution and urged the Director-General to mobilize more resources.

Dr OLIVEROS (Philippines) said that the proposed strategies would contribute to a holistic approach to oral health promotion and integrated disease prevention. The Philippines’ plans incorporated similar strategies, including a primary health-care approach, evidence-based practice, partnerships, a life-course perspective and integrated action.

Paragraph 1(1) of the draft resolution should be amended by inserting the words “into policy of maternal and child health and” after “incorporated” and by inserting “and communicable” after “noncommunicable”. In paragraph 1(9), “maternal care” should be inserted after “childhood illness”. A new paragraph 1(14) should be added to read: “to strengthen partnerships and shared responsibility among stakeholders to maximize resources in support of national oral health programmes”.

Professor PEREIRA MIGUEL (Portugal) welcomed the draft resolution. The improvement of oral health was of major concern and it was several years since the Health Assembly had adopted a resolution on the subject. Portugal had seen a sharp decline in tooth decay in children in recent years thanks to strong prevention policies. Activities should target vulnerable population groups, including people with disabilities and HIV/AIDS, smokers, pregnant women and elderly people.

Mr DANKOKO (Senegal) said that Senegal had made considerable progress in training and recruiting dental staff, with 1 per 22 000 inhabitants in 2007 compared with 1 per 56 000 in 1999. There were two training schools, one for dental surgeons, the other for dental assistants and technicians. Since the recruitment undertaken between 2002 and 2007, dental staff were available in all districts, and more than 100 licences for private dental practice had been issued since 2001. Public oral health services had been decentralized and incentives encouraged dental staff to work in remote rural areas. A division of oral health, with an operational and capital budget, had been established, with emphasis on oral health promotion and disease prevention. Senegal was implementing a noma control programme covering information, education, communication and training. He supported the draft resolution.

Professor KEVAU (Papua New Guinea), supporting the draft resolution, said that oral diseases represented a substantial public health problem in developing countries. National and international private entities whose products contributed to oral diseases should support national oral health programmes, which often faced resource constraints. In Papua New Guinea, use of tobacco and alcohol was frequently associated with chewing of betel nut, together with slaked lime. Oral cancer was the leading cancer and its prevalence was rising. However, facilities for early detection and timely intervention were limited. Research was needed to confirm and clarify evidence that the alkaloid arecoline, the main ingredient of betel nut, contributed to ischaemic heart disease and cardiac arrest.

Dr ALLEN-YOUNG (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the 14 member countries of the Caribbean Community, supported the draft resolution. Many countries were applying successful oral health strategies that included oral health promotion, and oral health care was integrated into primary health-care programmes. In Jamaica the salt fluoridation strategy, undertaken with the private sector, was considered a best practice, and the HIV/AIDS control programme included oral health promotion. As demographic profiles in the Community's countries changed, there was a need to target other vulnerable groups such as elderly people. In Barbados, emphasis was on people with disabilities. Oral health promotion should also be incorporated in activities to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent noncommunicable diseases. The countries of the Community, which suffered from the emigration of health-care workers, welcomed increased capacity for the training of oral health personnel and the expansion of dental school curricula.

Ms SIBUL (Estonia), endorsing the remarks made by the delegate of Finland, said that as oral health was essential to general health her Government gave it priority. She supported the draft resolution.

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) said that it was essential to reduce the risk factors for oral and other noncommunicable diseases; to focus on the most vulnerable population groups; to promote oral health care in schools and among elderly people; and to provide oral health care through primary health-care services. She supported the draft resolution. In relation to paragraph 1(4), on fluoridation programmes, she requested further information about recently published evidence that fluoridation might be associated with teratogenic effects in teeth.

Dr SULEIMAN (Oman), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, reported that diseases of the oral cavity were prevalent in the Region. The burden of oral diseases, people's needs, and oral health systems and scientific knowledge were changing rapidly. Public health-care decision-makers needed the tools, capacity and information to

assess health needs, choose intervention strategies, design policies and improve oral health systems. Oral health promotion had been neglected because of the scarcity of resources. Oral health promotion would work only if it was made part of broader health promotion initiatives and integrated into primary health care. In some parts of the Region access to oral health services was limited and teeth were often left untreated or else extracted. The proportion of edentulous adults aged 65 years and older remained high.

He noted with satisfaction that the draft resolution built on the 10 priority areas identified in The world oral health report 2003.¹ WHO should provide technical support for the integration of oral health promotion into primary health care, and WHO country and regional offices should have sufficient technical capacity to provide guidance to Member States. WHO should support countries with oral health disease surveillance, an item which should be included in the resolution. The STEPwise approach to surveillance was not sufficient. Oral health diseases had to be included in the existing health information system, from primary to tertiary care level. He wholeheartedly supported the draft resolution.

Professor FAIZ (Bangladesh) observed that many oral diseases and conditions could be prevented by making basic knowledge available to community health-care professionals. Despite resource limitations, Bangladesh had taken steps to improve oral health care, including school health programmes, provision of fluoride toothpaste and oral care education for diabetic patients, but they fell short of needs.

Dr SEKAJUGO (Uganda) reported that in response to an increasing burden of oral disease, Uganda had embarked on the recommended preventive, screening and treatment strategies. Implementation of the resolution would lead to improved oral health in developing countries.

Dr BOUAKAZ (Algeria) said that oral and dental health in Algeria was an integral part of general health care. The emphasis was on prevention in schools at primary, secondary and tertiary level, as the impact of oral conditions on health had been conclusively demonstrated. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr CHITUWO (Zambia) said that the report on oral health had highlighted the need to do more to promote oral health. Zambia had seen an increase in oral diseases associated with HIV/AIDS and linked to the aggressive marketing of sugary drinks. Efforts to improve oral health included promotion activities in schools and the installation of dental equipment at various health-care levels. A school of dentistry should open soon in order to help to meet the serious shortage of oral health specialists in all categories, and his country was pressing ahead with preventive work. He supported the draft resolution.

Professor OKONOFUA (Nigeria) welcomed the draft resolution. Nigeria had strengthened its oral health services by promoting primary prevention. Oral health was important to the Government's comprehensive health promotion strategies. Nigeria had six dental schools but, largely owing to the "brain drain", not enough dental workers provided optimal oral health services. Training and improvements to delivery of oral health services, especially in rural areas, would continue and the integration of oral health into primary health care was planned.

Dr MAKUBALO (South Africa) agreed that oral health-care promotion should be part of primary health care. It should encompass oral hygiene, exposure to fluoride, a healthy diet and the prevention of trauma to the face and mouth. South Africa had programmes aimed at improving oral hygiene and oral health services in general. He endorsed the draft resolution.

¹ Document WHO/NMH/NPH/ORH/03.2.

Dr AERDEN (FDI World Dental Federation), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said the draft resolution sent a clear signal to the international health community that oral diseases needed urgent and sustained attention from all stakeholders. It was important to tackle the pandemic of untreated childhood caries, but also to take a holistic life-course approach to oral health and to recognize different disease patterns and health needs. The Federation endorsed the central role of oral health professionals; workforce planning and human resources for oral health were an essential part of every national health plan. Best practice models for the successful integration of oral health in primary health care existed and all people should have equal access to basic oral health care and preventive care.

She urged the Health Assembly to adopt the draft resolution; to include oral health in the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013; and to use technical support from WHO and her organization to implement affordable oral care at realistic cost at all levels of the health care system.

Dr BARNARD (International Association for Dental Research), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that oral health was a necessary ingredient of total health and contributed to a healthy immune system. Researchers in his Association were defining strong oral-systemic linkages. The sharing of knowledge across Member States and international agencies would reduce the burden of oral disease. He supported the draft resolution and welcomed the reference to the need for oral health research.

Ms THORSEN (FDI World Dental Federation), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, and on behalf of the International Lactation Consultant Association, said that the Association welcomed the warning against inadequate exposure to fluoride contained in the report, but highlighted the possible dangers of fluoridation for bottle-fed infants. Parents might lack the information needed concerning what type of water to use for infant formula in order to avoid overexposure to fluorides. She appreciated the recognition given to the role of breastfeeding in promoting oral health, the foundations of which were laid in infancy when decisions about infant feeding were made. Sugary liquids in baby bottles, and sugar consumption in general, were major causes of tooth decay, whereas breastfeeding promoted oral health by preventing tooth decay and ensuring optimum development of the oral cavity.

She would have liked to see a reference in the draft resolution to the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding. The link between good oral health and the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding in health programmes was critical in policy, strategy and implementation. That link would lead to coordinated approaches across the life-cycle and across technical areas.

Dr LE GALÈS-CAMUS (Assistant Director-General) acknowledged the support for the Secretariat's work on oral health, and noted the emphasis on oral health and the need to step up action in the following areas: technical assistance to countries and regions where the disease burden and needs were greatest; primary prevention, especially to combat the main risk factors, many of which were attributable to chronic noncommunicable diseases, and action on other determinants of oral health, especially high-risk and vulnerable groups; reinforced oral health services; the adoption of surveillance activities; and primary health care that gave a proper place to oral health. Those suggestions would guide WHO's work on the issue.

On the question raised by the delegate of Greece, she said that decades of practice had shown that fluoride was an effective means of combating and preventing dental caries. However, programmes in various settings had shown that the possible undesirable health consequences of overexposure to, or overconsumption of, fluorides could be avoided while the preventive effect of fluoride against dental caries was preserved. Decisions on implementing programmes to increase fluoride concentrations must therefore take account of the specific situation in each country. She could make the relevant technical documentation available to the delegate of Greece and other interested delegations.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General), recapitulating the amendments proposed to the draft resolution, said that in paragraph 1(1), the words “and communicable” would be inserted after “noncommunicable” and the words “as well as maternal and child health policy” would be added at the end of the subparagraph. In paragraph 1(9), the words “and maternal care” would be inserted after “childhood illness”. In paragraph 1(13), the words “to consider increasing” would be replaced by “to increase, as appropriate,” and an additional subparagraph (14) would be added to paragraph 1, reading: “to strengthen partnerships and shared responsibility among stakeholders to maximize resources in support of national oral health programmes”.

In paragraph 2(1) the words “needs of low-income countries” would be replaced by “and unique needs of low- and middle-income countries”. The words “including increasing budgetary and human resources at all levels” would be inserted at the end of paragraph 2(5).

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) suggested that the words “as appropriate” should be inserted after “increasing” in the amended version of paragraph 2(5).

The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved the draft resolution, as amended.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Working towards universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions: biennial report: Item 12.10 of the Agenda (Document A60/17)

Ms KONGSVIK (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, as well as Austria, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, said that more than 300 million women in the developing world currently suffered from short- or long-term illness and disabilities brought about by pregnancy-related complications. A child died every three seconds and a pregnant woman every minute – a loss of over 11 million lives annually, 98% of them in poor countries. Such lives could be saved by cost-effective and, in most cases, easily implemented health interventions. Resolution WHA58.31 set out a clear mandate for all Member States to work towards universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions, yet document A60/17 reported only modest progress in improving the situation. It was a matter of serious concern that the goal of universal access to reproductive health by 2015 might not be achieved.

Improving maternal and child health necessitated the empowerment of women: ensuring the right of girls and women to education, to employment opportunities and to making choices concerning their own bodies. It was unethical for women to risk their health and lives when giving birth or terminating a pregnancy. Poor women faced an unacceptably higher risk. Because maternal and child health also depended on safer sex, men’s responsibilities in that regard must be emphasized.

The appropriate response was to provide access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortions. Some neglected and underfunded issues, such as family planning, adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights and harmful traditional practices, should also be addressed. She applauded the 18 African countries that had outlawed female genital mutilation and commended countries such as Senegal that had adopted an effective and participatory approach in order to ensure that legal provisions were followed up by practical actions to preserve the integrity of girls’ and women’s bodies.

Political will and accelerated action were required. In that connection, she welcomed the fact that the Special Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Health (Maputo, 18–22 September 2006) had reaffirmed political support for sexual and reproductive health rights in

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s third report and adopted as resolution WHA60.17.

the African Region and had adopted a plan of action, subsequently endorsed by the African Union in January 2007. She also welcomed the new target for reproductive health under Millennium Development Goal 5. Increased advocacy for maternal and child health was needed in order to reach Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 and to stimulate national political action at the highest level. In particular, health services must be strengthened at the local level in accordance with national plans by, among other things, addressing human resource constraints. Indicators for maternal and child mortality must be used as a measure for results-based improvements.

Global coordination must also be strengthened and the core functions of international agencies reinforced in line with the United Nations reform agenda. WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA and the new global Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health were important allies in that initiative. Ensuring appropriate health interventions and achieving the Millennium Development Goals on maternal health and reduction of child mortality needed increased human and financial resources that would be used effectively at the country and district levels.

Mr HOFMANN (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, welcomed the report and WHO's continued efforts to improve access to maternal, newborn and child health interventions. However, progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals relating to child mortality, maternal health and HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases was slow. The extreme shortage of human resources for sexual and reproductive health must be tackled. The European Union had established a policy framework and increased commitments in that area. He urged the Organization to include in its report the important links between maternal, child and newborn health and other health issues, such as nutrition, water and sanitation, education on sexual and reproductive health, and non-health issues, such as infrastructure, power, transport and communications.

The European Union would continue to support partners in their commitments to achieving gender equality; however, implementation must be improved. He welcomed the new target in the Millennium Development Goals of universal access to reproductive health by 2015 and urged WHO to implement the maternal and child health strategies on which agreement had already been achieved, particularly its global strategies on reproductive health (2004) and for the prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections (2006–2015), progress on which was crucial for the improvement of maternal, newborn and child health.

Access to sexual and reproductive health care, as recommended by the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, was still limited. There were acute supply shortages of family planning commodities, including condoms. Given the low level of prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and of effective care of children in the neonatal period, and the fact that the survival of newborns was largely dependent on the mother's survival, how was WHO approaching the issue of primary HIV prevention in relation to preventing mother-to-child transmission, including antenatal care and the care of HIV-infected parents?

Progress by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA in the context of United Nations reform would contribute to achieving a continuum of care between maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health. Better coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions would require firm political commitment on the part of all.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that a survey conducted in Iraq in 2006 had revealed an improvement in the under-five and infant mortality rates, at 41 and 34 per 1000 live births, respectively. However, Iraq's maternal and child health programmes still needed WHO's support in: introducing and implementing evidence-based guidelines on pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum and newborn care and family planning; improving the quality of services for newborn babies and infants by implementing the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy; improving mortality statistics; establishing an effective health information system and strengthening the national surveillance of health determinants; monitoring implementation; improving access to family planning services and emergency obstetric care at the district level; and increasing community awareness of women's and mothers' health needs.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) said that priority should be given to improving access to maternal, newborn and child health care as part of a core package of primary health-care services. That would help countries to meet the Millennium Development Goal of reducing child mortality by two thirds by 2015. That core package did not include abortion except when consistent with national and, where applicable, local law, and with full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds, as was stated in resolution WHA55.19. His Government strongly endorsed the need to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health, as articulated in Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5, which were universally recognized as essential development priorities. However, the United States was opposed to adding new elements to the Millennium Development Goals matrix; as many countries lacked the resources and expertise to gather data that met basic international standards, all should focus on reliable indicators that were appropriate for meaningful global monitoring.

Dr OLIVEROS (Philippines) commended the report's analysis of trends in coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions. The Philippines had experienced difficulty in meeting Target 6 of Millennium Development Goal 5 on reducing maternal mortality. Consequently, advocacy for facility-based childbirth assisted by skilled attendants had resulted in a shift from a risk approach to an emergency care approach that considered all pregnancies as high risk. The Health Assembly should support the proposed global fund for maternal, newborn and child health.

Mr DANKOKO (Senegal), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, acknowledged progress in setting up institutional and regulatory frameworks; increased awareness, knowledge and ownership of programmes; and the adoption of an approach based on equality of access to care. Poverty reduction strategies and national health programmes had been instituted in many African countries with the aim of reducing fertility rates and maternal and infant mortality rates. WHO had assisted in training experts in emergency obstetric and neonatal care and in maternal death audit methods, and in training midwives and nurses and skilled birth attendants. Deliveries and caesarean births had been subsidized, multisectoral approaches adopted and the participation of the community, civil society and especially women, included in the decision-making and planning process.

The Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy had been adopted in 44 of the 46 countries in the African Region, an evaluation study in the United Republic of Tanzania having shown that it had contributed to a 15% reduction in mortality among under five-year-olds over a two-year period. A child survival strategy for the African Region, jointly developed by WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank, and adopted by the Regional Committee for Africa at its fifty-sixth session, called for a package of cost-effective core interventions. Twenty-four trained facilitators were supporting countries in integrating prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and in some countries new strategies were being adopted as well for obstetric fistulas, female genital mutilation, adolescent health and sexual abuse. Other initiatives included: capacity building of training establishments and decentralization of paramedic training; increasing the number of health professionals recruited each year and increasing health budgets; revision of the list of essential drugs and medicines for the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy; social mobilization to encourage a wider use of insecticide-treated nets; and coordination of mass vaccination campaigns.

However, the Millennium Development Goals were far from being met. Constraints included: insufficient health coverage, especially in outlying regions; the high cost of services; the lack of qualified personnel, and technical and logistical services; sociocultural factors; insufficient coordination of programmes and integration of services; and lack of resources and management. African countries needed to build efficient and accessible national health care systems; develop, manage and retain human resources for health; develop multisectoral collaboration; and make maternal and child health a priority.

He welcomed the proposal of the Prime Minister of Norway in the third plenary meeting to develop a "global business plan" to accelerate progress towards Millennium Development Goals 4 and

5.¹ WHO should encourage development partners to further assist Africa in achieving adequate coverage in maternal, newborn and child health care.

Ms PINTO FERNÁNDEZ (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her Ministry of Health was committed to providing free, accessible and universal health care, with the aim of achieving Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 (Targets 5 and 6). The Government's maternal health project covered sexual and reproductive health, child and adolescent health, breastfeeding and community participation. The strategies included information campaigns on: prenatal and child health care; nutrition during pregnancy; breastfeeding; immunization of children; and recognizing danger signs in order to ensure that postpartum care prevented the death of mothers and newborns. Immunization and vaccination programmes for adults and children had been introduced and vaccination coverage was between 80% and 85%. Emphasis was placed on the provision of quality services and the training of doctors and nurses in obstetric and neonatal care. Free family planning and contraceptive services had been introduced. A law enacted in 2006 gave women the right to a life free from violence, which included the crime of obstetric violence. Another recent law promoted breastfeeding.

Dr HEIDARI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that investing in maternal and child care services was both rewarding and cost-effective. In his country, such services, including family planning, had been integrated into primary health-care services. More than 95% of the population had access to maternal and child health-care interventions and, as a result, maternal, infant and child mortality had decreased significantly.

Dr RAMATLAPENG (Lesotho) said that a road map had been launched in 2006 in order to: provide better access to family planning services in the community; ensure that women reached a health facility for delivery; and update skills and provide supervisory support for safe deliveries and better post-abortion care. Unless measures were taken to expand child health services, the child health gains made during the 1980s would be reversed. Already, indicators showed a worsening situation: infant mortality had risen from 75 per 1000 live births in 2001 to 91 in 2004. Immunization services had, though, improved and efforts were being made to maintain coverage at over 90% and to remain poliomyelitis-free with active surveillance for imported cases. The Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy was followed in all 17 hospitals and 158 health centres, but the country continued to face the challenges of high levels of malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency disorders.

Ms SONG Li (China) endorsed the statement made by the delegate of Norway. Maternal and child health was a priority for her Government, which was working to reduce gaps in health status between women and children, focusing in particular on the poor. A programme launched in 2000 had helped to lower pregnancy-related mortality, increase the hospital delivery rate and reduce the occurrence of neonatal tetanus. However, China still faced many challenges in attaining the Millennium Development Goals relating to maternal and child health, especially in non-urban areas. China urged WHO and the international community to increase financial and technical support for the improvement of women's and children's health and for the achievement of universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions, especially among poor populations in developing countries.

Ms NGAUNJE (Malawi) said that her country had some of the worst maternal and child health indicators in the world. The Government had taken measures to accelerate the reduction of maternal and child mortality, and was increasing the number of skilled health workers and the number of births attended by skilled health workers. Some health facilities were being upgraded, and resources had been allocated for obstetric and neonatal medicines. Malawi had also developed an action plan for

¹ Document WHA60/2007/REC/2, in press.

preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, seeking comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention services in all of the country's 525 antenatal care clinics. Malawi had begun to implement the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy in the late 1990s. The country had recently embarked on a massive recruitment of health surveillance assistants, in order to achieve a coverage ratio of 1 assistant per 1000 households.

Dr ZAMPALIGRE (Burkina Faso) said that rates of maternal, neonatal and child mortality and morbidity remained high in Burkina Faso. The Government had adopted strategies concerning: the reduction of mortality; the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy; nutrition; immunization over a 10-year period; and subsidies for childbirth and emergency obstetric and neonatal care. However, their implementation was hindered by a shortage of trained personnel, inadequate resources and a lack of community-based interventions.

Dr SUGIURA (Japan), noting that the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy was not mentioned in the report, requested information on its contribution to universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions. He also asked for clarification of the meaning of "continuum of care", mentioned in paragraph 12 of the report, as it related specifically to maternal, newborn and child health. He looked forward to the second report on universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions in 2009.

Dr MAAMOURI (Tunisia) shared concerns about the slow progress in some developing countries towards the goal of universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions. There were, however, improvements, for example in immunization coverage. Maternal, neonatal and child health interventions had increased over the years, and political will for the further expansion existed at the highest levels. Technical support was needed to overcome the various obstacles to improved services and coverage.

Dr BODZONGO (Congo) said that the first sentence in paragraph 5 of the report failed to take account of efforts to improve the coverage of skilled attendance at birth, which was one goal of the road maps that had been developed and used by most sub-Saharan countries. He therefore requested that the words "except in sub-Saharan Africa" should be removed. Furthermore, the issue of maternal mortality could not be addressed without talking about abortion. He agreed with the statement made by the delegate of Norway in that regard, but emphasized that the issue of abortion must be considered in the context of overall health services for women and the laws in each Member State.

Dr MAZHANI (Botswana) emphasized improved maternal, newborn and child health and aligned his country with the statement made by the delegate of Norway. However, access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortion, should be within the legal framework of each country.

Dr CHITUWO (Zambia) echoed the concern voiced over slow progress towards universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions. Child and maternal morbidity and mortality remained unacceptably high in some parts of the world and many countries might not achieve Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5. What was needed was well known, and numerous evidence-based interventions existed. Emergency obstetric and newborn care, for example, saved lives, but in many countries such services were non-existent at the primary health-care level. The biggest difficulty was inadequate resources. He welcomed the increase in resources to fight HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, but would welcome even more the integration of efforts to combat those diseases into efforts to enhance maternal and child health. Funding agencies had to be more flexible in the use of funds in order to benefit mothers and children.

Zambia's road map towards reduced maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality had been integrated into provincial and district plans. Zambia promoted community initiatives for a continuum of care for mothers and children; it also welcomed the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child

Health, which would enable Member States to combine their strengths. Zambia intended to implement the African Union plan of action for achieving universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care in Africa. In that connection, he welcomed the statement by the delegate of Norway.

Dr AMOS (South Africa) stressed the role of poverty and underdevelopment in maternal, newborn and infant mortality and morbidity, particularly in the African Region. The Secretariat should provide models to assist Member States in tackling the inequalities in service provision, particularly in the most inaccessible communities. Limited human resources and the migration of health workers in particular required attention.

With regard to the first sentence of paragraph 5 of the report, she observed that in South Africa more than 90% of births were professionally assisted and an even higher coverage had been achieved in antenatal care services. Important gains had also been made in improving access to primary health care, in implementing the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy and in immunization coverage, both generally and specifically for childhood illnesses.

Ms DE HOZ (Argentina) said that her country's main child health objectives were to prevent developmental problems, and ensure early detection of diseases. Children's growth and development were followed by medical teams, and guidance was given where necessary. Since 1990, and particularly in the period 2004–2005, the infant mortality rate had decreased.

The most common causes of maternal mortality, which had declined considerably in Argentina, were linked to socioeconomic conditions.

Dr PHUSIT PRAKONGSAI (Thailand) said that in 2001 Thailand had introduced tax-funded health insurance, including interventions in the areas of maternal and child health, for 47 million of its 64 million people. However, he urged the Director-General, Member States and other organizations to tackle the inadequacy and scarcity of infrastructure and human resources in the area of maternal and child health services.

The weakness of vital registration and household surveys on health status and use of health services by people at risk hampered assessment of progress towards universal coverage. Ascertaining inequities in access to health services and the health status of mothers and children in various socioeconomic groups was important, and he urged WHO to support the strengthening of health information systems.

Faster progress towards universal coverage was needed in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, particularly with regard to family planning and antenatal and postnatal care. Interventions at all levels were crucial for monitoring and evaluating maternal and child health coverage.

Mr NAEEM (Afghanistan) emphasized that his country was in a post-conflict state, with maternal and infant mortality rates among the highest in the world. The Ministry of Public Health had therefore developed a policy document in 2003, focusing on maternal and child health. The US\$ 4.5 per capita available fell far short of the figure of US\$ 34 per capita recommended by a WHO study and only provided minimum services. The Government provided services in three provinces; services in the remaining 31 provinces had been contracted to nongovernmental organizations and volunteers. In 2007, sub-centres had been introduced in an effort to improve access to basic maternal and child health services, but resources were still meagre and Afghanistan would need technical and financial support from the Secretariat and other Member States.

Ms NKURUNZIZA (Burundi) expressed support for the statement made by the delegate of Norway. Burundi's high maternal and infant mortality rates had prompted the Government to provide free health care for children under five and free obstetric services for mothers giving birth in health-care facilities, which had increased the use of such services by 50%.

As a post-conflict country, however, lack of equipment, infrastructure and human resources posed significant problems, as did mother-to-child transmission of HIV, which was still widespread,

despite the existence of effective treatments and strategies. WHO and the international community should therefore increase resources to support health systems, particularly in poor and post-conflict countries.

Dr BOUAKAZ (Algeria) said that a specific strategy was required to improve Africa's alarming maternal and infant mortality rates compared with those of developed countries. Algeria's national plan for neonatal and perinatal health 2006–2009 was aimed at reducing both those rates. The plan focused on the training of health personnel; establishment of neonatal units and services near or within obstetric, gynaecological or maternity facilities; provision of proper equipment for neonatal care, such as resuscitation units and incubators; and the strict monitoring of pregnancies involving risks such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

Professor OKONOFUA (Nigeria) emphasized improved maternal and child health through the delivery of modern, effective and efficient services, rather than the "traditional" services that had been promoted in the past.

In many societies, maternal and child health was not given the priority it deserved. Nigeria, however, had recently launched an integrated partnership for maternal, newborn and child health, which should contribute to reducing maternal and child mortality by 2015, and had introduced a maternal and child health advisory service. Free medical services would be provided to pregnant women and children under five in tertiary health institutions.

Maternal and child health indicators reflected a country's development, and he encouraged greater political priority to reducing maternal and child mortality rates in developing countries.

Dr BISWAS (Bangladesh) affirmed his country's implementation of a health, nutrition and population sector programme, a poverty reduction strategy and a maternal health strategy, in primary health care. However, only 10% of births occurred in care facilities and skilled birth attendance was available for only 13% of the community. A nationwide emergency programme had been established but was not yet yielding the desired results. A voucher scheme had also been introduced for the poorest pregnant women.

(For continuation of the discussion, see the summary record of the tenth meeting, section 2.)

The meeting rose at 13:00.

TENTH MEETING

Monday, 21 May 2007, at 10:00

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

1. THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE A (Document A60/58)

Mrs BU FIGUEROA (Honduras), Rapporteur, read out the draft third report of Committee A.

The report was adopted.¹

2. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Working towards universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions: biennial report: Item 12.10 of the Agenda (Document A60/17) (continued from the ninth meeting, section 2)

Dr MOOSA (Maldives), while appreciating the improvements made in some areas of maternal and child health, asked the Secretariat to increase provision of support for postnatal care in Member States given the many maternal and infant deaths. She was concerned to read in paragraph 18 of the report that three major donors had decreased their support for maternal, newborn and child health, making achievement of Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 less likely. It would be useful to identify the funding shortfalls regarding the Goals, and the mechanisms required to ensure efficient use of resources.

Dr MIDZI (Zimbabwe) said that Zimbabwe continued to pursue the Millennium Development Goals related to maternal, newborn and child health, despite enormous challenges. The maternal mortality ratio had fallen by half since 2002 to 555 per 100 000 live births in 2006 and the under-five mortality rate had declined by 20% to 82 per 1000 live births (although both rates remained high). Those improvements resulted from a sustained high vaccination rate averaging 89%, the scaling up of prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and the provision of free antenatal care services to all women in all public health institutions, resulting in antenatal coverage of 84%. He invited the Director-General to attend the launch of Zimbabwe's maternal, newborn and child road map in June 2007. However, the achievements were seriously threatened by a human resources shortage caused by the exodus of health-care professionals; a shortfall in equipment and vital medicines for emergency obstetric care; an ageing ambulance fleet; too few service vehicles for the outreach services of the Expanded Programme on Immunization; weak health systems; and new and emerging diseases that diverted resources from high-performing programmes. He called on WHO to assist countries such as his in preserving health gains.

¹ See page 311.

Dr GEORGE (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the 14 member countries of the Caribbean Community, said that the health and well-being of mothers and children was indicative of a country's state of development. The 14 countries continued to make gains in vaccine-preventable diseases, safe motherhood and the health of children, with an immunization coverage rate above 90%; and they remained free of poliomyelitis and measles. In seeking to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the Caribbean countries had placed maternal and child health within the context of a family health strategy. The maternal mortality ratio ranged from zero in Barbados to 910 per 100 000 live births in Haiti. Indirect causes of mortality, such as HIV/AIDS and violence, were increasing. However, innovations such as tracking of high-risk mothers by community health workers were being used, ensuring access to emergency obstetric care. Maternal deaths were systematically reviewed and an audit system had been tested in the field. More than 20% of pregnant women were adolescents, demonstrating the need for interventions to scale up programmes in adolescent reproductive health, pregnancy prevention and building life skills. Although gains had been made in maternal and child health, they were threatened by emerging childhood problems and the rapid loss of the skilled health workforce. He urged the Director-General to make human resources for health a priority, as countries needed to solve the problem of a diminishing health workforce. Initiatives might involve cross-training, gender balancing and greater funding for training.

Dr SOLOFONIRINA (Madagascar) said that, although maternal and child health remained a cause for concern, her country had reduced infant mortality rates from 117 per 1000 live births in 1997 to 94 per 1000 in 2006. Routine activities had been strengthened and mass vaccination campaigns for mothers and children introduced, combining the provision of insecticide-treated nets, vitamin A, iron and zinc supplements, and anti-parasite treatment. A coverage rate of 95% had been achieved and HIV testing introduced. She recommended devoting increased resources to that area of health care.

Mr MABUZA (Swaziland) said that much remained to be done to improve maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, including access to sexual and reproductive health, if the Millennium Development Goals were to be achieved. Implementation of the Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health, which had been adopted by African ministers of health in 2006, would help. Swaziland was improving its maternal health package, which included prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (with currently 50% coverage) and family planning. Child survival programmes in the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy and the Expanded Programme on Immunization were delivered by public-private partnerships. However, challenges were posed by the migration of specially trained health personnel. He supported the statement by the Nordic countries and others, notwithstanding the fact that abortion in Swaziland was governed by national laws.

Dr MUKELABAI (UNICEF) welcomed the report, which would assist countries in attaining the Millennium Development Goals on maternal and child survival. Most maternal, newborn and child deaths could be easily prevented with scaled-up interventions. Sadly, only seven out of 60 countries with the highest mortality rate in children under five years old were on track to reach the Millennium Development Goal on child survival. Likewise, in many countries with high maternal mortality ratios, more than 80% of pregnant women delivered without assistance of skilled attendants, thus increasing their chances of dying of labour and delivery complications. In 2005, UNICEF had joined WHO and other partners to form the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, which was working with several countries in maternal and child survival. Further initiatives included a child survival strategy for the African Region proposed by WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank, from which a road map for child survival was being developed. Member States should sustain the highest political commitment and allocate resources to maternal, newborn and child health programmes. UNICEF appreciated the increasing commitment of donor countries, foundations and the private sector, and welcomed the proposal for a "global business plan" to accelerate achievement of Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5, put forward by the Prime Minister of Norway. UNICEF endorsed WHO's biennial report and looked forward to more countries achieving the Goals.

Ms CALDWELL (International Council of Nurses), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN and on behalf of the International Confederation of Midwives, commended the wider availability of professional assistance in childbirth, but noted with concern the higher rates of maternal mortality in sub-Saharan Africa and called for greater efforts to scale up skilled midwifery and nursing services. It was also troubling that pregnancy was increasing in 15- to 19-year-old young women. As stated in *The world health report 2005*,¹ every mother and baby needed care that was close to where people lived and close to their birth culture, but at the same time safe and given by a skilled professional. She urged that efforts be continued to extend the coverage of care given by midwives and nurse-midwives where it was most needed, thus helping to achieve Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5.

The report detailed progress in immunization coverage, although the poor coverage rates of low-cost practices, such as exclusive breastfeeding for babies up to six months of age and provision of insecticide-treated nets, were disappointing. Effective care in the neonatal period reached too few children, reflecting a failure to provide a continuum of care from family planning, pregnancy and childbirth to post-partum and newborn care. The bodies she represented were committed to working towards universal coverage and supported national and global initiatives aimed at increasing access to health care for women, babies and children.

Ms STERKEN (International Lactation Consultant Association), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN and on behalf of the International Baby Food Action Network, Churches' Action for Health and Consumers International, noted that, according to a report on newborn survival, appropriate breastfeeding could reduce mortality in children under five, even in the context of HIV/AIDS. With 50% or more of children under six months of age being exclusively breastfed in 10 countries and breastfeeding rates of 20% or less in 23 countries, the biennial report showed that WHO's recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continuation for up to two years was far from being implemented. Out of 10.9 million deaths in children under five, four million were of babies in the first month of life. A study of 10 000 neonates in Ghana had reported that the risk of neonatal death was four times higher in children given animal formula or solids in addition to breastfeeding, and that a delay in breastfeeding initiation beyond the first hour or first day was associated with an increased risk of newborn mortality; further studies should be done to confirm those findings.

Early initiation of breastfeeding was a key element of the UNICEF/WHO Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative and some 20 000 hospitals worldwide had achieved Baby-Friendly accreditation, as part of WHO's Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, adopted in 2002. Meanwhile, the nongovernmental community, on behalf of which she spoke, requested the assistance of health ministers in celebrating World Breastfeeding Week 2007 under the theme "Initiation of breastfeeding during the first hour after birth".

Ms SACKSTEIN (International Alliance of Women), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that 95% of the 529 000 maternal deaths each year occurred in Africa and most could be avoided through a few simple interventions. The burden fell mainly on women in low-income countries and those living in poverty in affluent societies. Family planning programmes were increasingly scarce, often driven out of developing countries' health funding for ideological reasons. Skilled attendance in delivery, backed up by emergency obstetric care, would reduce maternal deaths by 75%; family planning could also reduce maternal and child deaths. Maternal mortality exposed profound global, ethnic and gender inequalities that were both health and human rights issues. It deserved more attention, despite WHO's many efforts such as its "Make every mother and child count" campaign in 2005. Combating maternal mortality could become both a powerful motor for

¹ *The World Health Report 2005: Make every mother and child count*. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2005.

strengthening health systems accessible to all and pivotal to attaining most Millennium Development Goals.

Mrs MAFUBELU (Assistant Director-General) commended the many measures Member States had taken to provide universal coverage of maternal, newborn and child health interventions. The Secretariat shared concerns at the slow pace of progress towards Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5. With renewed commitments from Member States and development partners, progress could be accelerated and the Goals achieved on time. In that regard, she welcomed the plan of action adopted at the African Union Conference of Ministers of Health (Maputo, September 2006) and the global business plan proposed by the Prime Minister of Norway, which should ensure that more resources were allocated to that important area of work.

She welcomed development partners' financial support in that area, such as the European Union's funding to six African countries and two South American countries. WHO's collaboration with relevant partners would continue, in order to harmonize efforts within the United Nations system to increase technical support to Member States.

WHO's programmes on maternal, child and reproductive health, with UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Bank, development partners, nongovernmental organizations and professional bodies, were scaling up activities and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, particularly in Africa. WHO, with its partners, was tackling malaria in pregnancy, as antenatal care provided a unique opportunity to deal with mother-to-child transmission of HIV and malaria in pregnancy. Although the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses strategy was not specifically referred to in the report, specific interventions were, including management of diarrhoea and pneumonia, and newborn care. The strategy remained central to the key interventions to reduce under-five mortality, and would be covered in the forthcoming biennial report to the Health Assembly.

Although professional assistance in childbirth in sub-Saharan Africa was insufficient, progress had been made in Botswana, Cape Verde, Congo, Gabon, Mauritius and South Africa. The proportion of births assisted by skilled birth attendants in those countries currently exceeded 80%. She expressed regret that the report had failed to acknowledge that achievement.

Continuum of care had two dimensions within the context of the report. At the service level, it ensured the necessary linkages between care at the community and primary levels and care at the secondary and tertiary levels, such as dealing with complications during pregnancy and providing certain types of family planning. It also referred to interventions during key stages of the life course.

WHO would hold an expert committee meeting in 2007, to address the issue of post-partum care, with the aim of improving the coverage of post-natal care.

She had taken note of the invitation from the delegate of Zimbabwe.

WHO would continue to implement key health strategies to improve maternal, newborn and child health, notably the global strategy on reproductive health and the global strategy on prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections. The Director-General was committed to ensuring that the achievements of the Organization were measured by their impact on the health of the people of Africa and the health of women. It was in that context that efforts to improve the health of women, newborns and children were being intensified.

The Committee noted the report.

Malaria, including proposal for establishment of World Malaria Day: Item 12.5 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R16, EB120.R16 Corr.1 and A60/12) (continued from the fifth meeting, section 3)

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the following draft resolution, as revised by an informal drafting group:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on malaria, including a proposal for the establishment of Malaria Day;¹

Concerned that malaria continues to cause more than one million preventable deaths a year;

Noting that the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Bank Global Strategy and Booster Program, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Malaria Initiative of the President of the United States of America, and other donors have made substantial resources available;

Welcoming the contribution to the mobilization of resources for development of voluntary innovative financing initiatives taken by groups of Member States and, in this regard, noting the activities of the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID);

Recalling that combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases is included in internationally agreed health-related development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

Mindful that the global burden of malaria needs to be decreased in order to reach the Millennium Development Goal of reducing the mortality rate among children under five by two thirds by 2015 and to help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals of improving maternal health and eradicating extreme poverty,

1. URGES Member States:

(1) to apply to their specific contexts the evidenced-based policies, strategies and tools recommended by WHO, and performance-based monitoring and evaluation in order to expand coverage with major preventive interventions in populations at risk and curative interventions for patients suffering from malaria and to assess programme performance and the coverage and impact of interventions in an effective and timely manner, particularly with use of the WHO country-profile database;

(2) to assign national and international resources, both human and financial, for the provision of technical support in order to ensure that the most locally and epidemiologically appropriate strategies are effectively implemented and target populations are reached;

(3) to cease progressively the provision in both the public and private sectors of oral artemisinin monotherapies, to promote the use of artemisinin-combination therapies, and to implement policies that prohibit the production, marketing, distribution and the use of counterfeit antimalarial medicines;

(4) to intensify access to affordable, safe and effective antimalarial combination treatments, to intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancies, with special precautions for HIV-infected pregnant women who are receiving co-trimoxazole chemotherapy, to insecticide-treated mosquito nets, including through the free distribution of such nets where appropriate, and indoor residual spraying for malaria control with suitable and safe insecticides, taking into account relevant international rules, standards and guidelines;

¹ Document A60/12.

- (5) to provide, whenever necessary, in their legislation for use, to the full, of the flexibilities contained in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights in order to promote access to pharmaceutical products;¹
 - (6) to use all necessary administrative and legislative means, including, where appropriate, the use of provisions in international agreements, including the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights in order to promote access to preventive technologies against malaria;
 - (7) to aim at reducing or interrupting malaria transmission, wherever feasible, through integrated vector management, promoting improvement of local and environmental conditions and healthy settings, and increasing access to basic health services, antimalarial medicines, diagnostics and preventive technologies in order to reduce the disease burden;
 - (8) to implement integrated approaches to malaria prevention and control through multisectoral collaboration and community responsibility and participation;
2. REQUESTS international organizations and financing bodies:
- (1) to provide support for the development of capacities in developing countries in order to expand use of: reliable diagnostics, artemisinin-based combination therapies that are appropriate for local drug-resistance conditions, integrated vector management including long-lasting insecticide-treated nets and larvicidal measures, indoor residual spraying with appropriate and safe insecticides as indicated by WHO and in accordance with the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants,² and monitoring and evaluation systems, including use of the country database developed by WHO;
 - (2) to increase funding for malaria control, so that the relevant agencies can continue providing support to countries, and to channel additional resources into technical support so that the financial resources can be absorbed and used effectively in countries;
 - (3) to provide support for malaria elimination in areas where feasible and sustainable;
 - (4) to adjust their policies so as progressively to cease to fund the provision and distribution of oral artemisinin monotherapies, and to join in campaigns to prohibit the production, marketing, distribution and use of counterfeit antimalarial medicines;
3. REQUESTS the Director-General:
- (1) to take steps to identify gaps in knowledge about malaria control and elimination; to provide support for the development of new tools for diagnostics, therapy, prevention and control, and strategies; to estimate more accurately the global burden of disease and determine trends; to develop new tools and methods for assessing impact and cost-effectiveness of interventions; to build up WHO's current research on malaria, including that of the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases; to provide technical support to countries for conducting operational and implementation research; and to mobilize resources and increase support for research in the development of new tools and strategies for prevention and control of malaria;

¹ "The WTO General Council in its Decision of 30 August 2003 on Implementation of paragraph 6 of the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health decided that "pharmaceutical product" means any patented product, or product manufactured through a patented process, of the pharmaceutical sector needed to address the public health problems as recognized in paragraph 1 of the Declaration. It is understood that active ingredients necessary for its manufacture and diagnostic kits needed for its use would be included".

² The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Annex B, Part II, paragraphs 1–5) allows for temporary DDT use for the purpose of malaria vector control while maintaining the goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating the use of DDT and calls for the development of alternatives.

- (2) to strengthen and rationalize human resources for malaria by deploying staff to country level, thus improving the capacity of WHO's country offices to provide technical guidance to national health programmes;
- (2bis) to provide support to coordinating partners and countries for malaria control in refugee camps and in complex emergencies;
- (3) to improve the coordination between different stakeholders in the fight against malaria;
- (3bis) to support the sound management of DDT use for vector control in accordance with the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants,¹ and to share data on such use with Member States;
- (4) to report to the Health Assembly biennially through the Executive Board on progress made in implementation of this resolution;

4. RESOLVES that:

- (1) World Malaria Day shall be commemorated annually on 25 April, or on such other day or days as individual Member States may decide, in order to provide education and understanding of malaria as a global scourge that is preventable and a disease that is curable;
- (2) World Malaria Day shall be the culmination of year-long intensified implementation of national malaria-control strategies, including community-based activities for malaria prevention and treatment in endemic areas, and the occasion to inform the general public of the obstacles encountered and progress achieved in controlling malaria.

The draft resolution was approved.²

Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning: Item 12.6 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R3, and A60/13) (continued from the eighth meeting)

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the following draft resolution, as revised by an informal drafting group:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning;³

Noting the progress made since 1991 towards achieving the international targets for 2005, and more recently following the establishment, in response to resolution WHA51.13, of the Stop TB Partnership;

Aware of the need to build on this progress and overcome constraints in order to reach the international targets for tuberculosis control for 2015 set by the Stop TB Partnership – in line with the internationally agreed development goal relevant to tuberculosis contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration to “have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of major diseases” – of halving tuberculosis prevalence and death rates by 2015 compared with 1990 levels;

¹ The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Annex B, Part II, paragraphs 1–5) allows for temporary DDT use for the purpose of malaria vector control while maintaining the goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating the use of DDT and calls for the development of alternatives.

² Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's fourth report and adopted as resolution WHA60.18.

³ Document A60/13.

Noting the development of the Stop TB strategy as a comprehensive approach to tuberculosis prevention and control that incorporates the internationally agreed tuberculosis control strategy (DOTS strategy) and represents a significant expansion in the scale and scope of tuberculosis-control activities;

Welcoming the Partnership's Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015, which sets out the activities oriented towards implementing the Stop TB strategy and achieving the international targets for tuberculosis control for 2015;

Aware of the need to increase the scope, scale and speed of research needed to achieve the international targets for tuberculosis control for 2015 and the goal of eliminating tuberculosis as a global public-health problem by 2050;

Concerned that delays in implementing the Global Plan will result in increasing numbers of tuberculosis cases and deaths, including those due to multidrug-resistant (and extensively drug-resistant) tuberculosis and to the impact of HIV, and therefore in delays in achieving by 2015 the international targets for tuberculosis control and the internationally agreed development goal relevant to tuberculosis contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

Recognizing the importance of the situation and the trends of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis as barriers to the achievement of the Global Plan's objectives by 2015, and the need for an increased number of Member States participating in the network of the Global Project on Anti-Tuberculosis Drug Resistance Surveillance and for the required additional resources to accomplish its task; [Thailand]

Recalling that resolution WHA58.14 encouraged Member States to fulfil their commitments to ensure the availability of sufficient domestic resources and of sufficient external resources to achieve the internationally agreed development goal relevant to tuberculosis contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

Welcoming the contribution to the mobilization of resources for development by voluntary innovative financing initiatives taken by groups of Member States and, in this regard, noting the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID), the International Finance Facility for Immunisation and the commitment to launch a pilot project within the advance market commitments initiatives, [Germany]

or

Welcoming the contribution to the mobilization of resources for development by voluntary innovative financing initiatives taken by groups of Member States [United States of America]

1. URGES all Member States:

(1) to develop and implement long-term plans for tuberculosis prevention and control in line with the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015, in the context of overall health development plans, in collaboration with other programmes (including those on HIV/AIDS, child health and strengthening of health systems), and through national Stop TB partnerships where appropriate, with the aim of:

(a) accelerating progress towards the international targets for tuberculosis control for 2015 through full and rapid implementation of the Stop TB strategy **with specific attention to vulnerable groups highly at risk, such as poor people, migrants and ethnic minorities; [Netherlands]**

(b) accelerating improvement of health-information systems, **both in general and for tuberculosis in particular, [Japan]** in order to serve the assessment of national programme performance;

(c) **ensuring high-quality implementation of the DOTS strategy by tuberculosis programmes as the first and foremost step in full implementation of the Stop TB strategy; [Japan]**

(d) ~~limiting-controlling~~ **[Micronesia (Federated States of)]** the emergence and transmission of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis, including extensively drug-

resistant tuberculosis, **by ensuring the high-quality implementation of the DOTS strategy and by [Japan]** prompt implementation of infection-control precautions;

(dbis) if affected, immediately addressing extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis **and HIV-related tuberculosis [Ethiopia]** as part of the overall Stop TB strategy, as the highest health priorities; **[Ethiopia]**

(e) enhancing laboratory capacity in order to provide for rapid drug-susceptibility testing of isolates obtained from all persons with culture-positive tuberculosis, **where resources are available, [Thailand]** and promote access to quality-assured sputum smear microscopy;

(f) increasing access to quality-assured second-line medicines at affordable prices through the Stop TB Partnership's Green Light Committee;

(g) accelerating collaborative interventions against HIV infection and tuberculosis; [Kenya]

(h) fully involving the private sector in national tuberculosis control programmes; [Swaziland]

(2) to use all possible financing mechanisms in order to fulfil the commitments made in resolution WHA58.14, including that to ensure sustainable domestic and external financing, thereby filling the funding gaps identified in the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015;

(3) to declare, where appropriate, tuberculosis as an emergency and to allocate additional resources in order to strengthen activities aimed at stopping the spread of extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to intensify support provided to Member States in expanding implementation of the Stop TB strategy by developing capacity and improving the performance of national tuberculosis-control programmes, particularly the quality of DOTS activities, and by implementing infection-control precautions within the broad context of strengthening health systems in order to achieve the international targets for 2015;

(1bis) to continue to provide support for the network of the Global Project on Anti-Tuberculosis Drug Resistance Surveillance by increasing the number of Member States in the network in order to inform the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015 through determination of the extent and trend of multidrug-resistant and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis; [Thailand]

(2) to strengthen urgently WHO's support to countries affected **by multidrug-resistant tuberculosis and especially [Swaziland]** extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis, ~~particularly where related to HIV;~~ **and to countries highly affected by HIV-related tuberculosis; [Ethiopia]**

(3) to enhance WHO's leadership within the Stop TB Partnership in its coordination of efforts to implement the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015 and to facilitate long-term commitment to sustainable financing of the Global Plan through improved mechanisms for increased funding;

(4) to strengthen mechanisms to review and monitor estimates of impact of control activities on the tuberculosis burden, including incidence, prevalence and mortality **with specific attention to vulnerable groups highly at risk, such as poor people, migrants and ethnic minorities; [Netherlands]**

- (5) to support Member States in developing laboratory capacity to provide for rapid drug-susceptibility testing of isolates obtained from all persons with culture-positive tuberculosis, **to develop consensus guidelines for rapid drug-susceptibility test methods and appropriate measures for laboratory strengthening, and to mobilize funding; [Thailand]**
- (6) to enhance WHO's role in tuberculosis research in order to promote the applied research necessary to reach the international targets for tuberculosis control for 2015 and the basic research necessary to achieve the goal of eliminating tuberculosis by 2050; and to increase global support for those areas of tuberculosis research that are currently underresourced, **especially enhancing research and development of new ~~Anti-Tuberculosis agents~~ diagnostics, drugs and vaccines and the relevance of nutrition to, and its interaction with, tuberculosis; [Kuwait]**
- (7) to report to the Sixty-third World Health Assembly through the Executive Board on:
- (a) progress in implementation of the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006–2015, including mobilization of resources from domestic and external sources for its implementation;
 - (b) progress made in achieving the international targets for tuberculosis control by 2015, using the “proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS)” (Millennium Development Goal indicator 24) as a measure of the performance of national programmes, and tuberculosis incidence and “prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis” (Millennium Development Goal indicator 23) as a measure of the impact of control on the tuberculosis epidemic.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) pointed out that those concerned by the final preambular paragraph had expressed a preference for the first option provided in the text of the draft resolution.

Dr METAI (Kiribati) supported the draft resolution. Kiribati had an unacceptably high incidence of tuberculosis, and the concomitant levels of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS were increasing. The presence of a drug-resistant tuberculosis patient was a serious threat. The inability to conduct a culture and sensitivity test for the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* at the national level left the country unable to detect cases resistant to tuberculosis drugs. Moreover, negative sputum cases on slide smears that might have been positive if they had been cultured could also be missed. External assistance was required to plug the funding gap for the national tuberculosis strategic plan, to provide medicines, and to improve data reporting.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Health promotion in a globalized world: Item 12.11 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R14, and A60/18)

Mrs REITENBACH (Germany), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Union, said that Turkey, Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova aligned themselves with her statement. She supported the draft resolution on health promotion in a globalized world contained in resolution EB120.R14.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's fourth report and adopted as resolution WHA60.19.

Health was influenced by determinants inside and outside the health sector, including income, education, employment, work environment and housing, which often had impacts that were unequally distributed among population groups. Tackling the wider determinants was the core of health promotion, and would reduce health inequalities in developing and developed countries alike. The project “Closing the Gap – Strategies for Action to Tackle Health Inequalities in Europe”, funded by the European Union, had underlined the need to focus on inequalities in health in all the Union’s Member States.

She welcomed the call for a government-wide approach and the consideration of the wider context of people’s lives in the Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World. The European Commission’s “Health in All Policies” strategy also aimed to treat health as an intersectoral issue that decision-making systematically took into account. A focus on the determinants of health, investment in health promotion and the active commitment of stakeholders in the field would improve equitable socioeconomic development. The European Union supported WHO in its aim to strengthen the evidence base for health promotion. Strong links were required between WHO’s regular activities and the Commission on Social Determinants of Health. WHO’s health promotion programme should be coordinated with top-level leadership, and the Director-General should emphasize the need for cross-cutting approaches to health in the United Nations reform process.

The German Government had organized a European Union conference on Prevention for Health, Nutrition and Physical Activity – a Key to Healthy Living (Badenweiler, Germany, 26–27 February 2007), which combined behavioural and settings-based prevention with health promotion measures. In its forthcoming Union presidency, Portugal would focus on better health for migrants.

She proposed that, in paragraphs 1(2) and 2(3) of the draft resolution, the words “including interministerial” should be inserted after “multisectoral”, since improved coordination between ministries was one key to strengthening the determinants of health.

She welcomed the Secretariat’s support to European Union Member States for building their capacity for health promotion. WHO should take a lead in activities aimed at putting the principles of health promotion into practice.

Dr ASLANYAN (Canada), supporting the draft resolution, said that health promotion had changed behaviour through social, policy and environmental interventions. It had helped to reduce causes of death and illness such as heart disease, road injuries, infectious diseases and HIV/AIDS. A current priority was to complement programmes that reduced risk factors with policies making for better health among vulnerable groups. He encouraged attendance at the World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, 10–15 June 2007).

Mr HERNÁNDEZ FLEITAS (Cuba) supported the call in the Bangkok Charter to develop a global treaty for health. Cuba’s health promotion policy was reaching all communities through local encouragement of healthy behaviours and lifestyles. A commission established in 2000 focused on risk factors in order to reduce the prevalence of diseases, and took into account factors such as water and air quality, and refuse management. Multisectoral efforts were tackling premature deaths and the burden of disability, and encouraging young people to adopt healthy behaviours and to take preventive measures against drug abuse.

He supported the draft resolution but proposed that it should include a reference to general practitioners’ training in applying health promotion in their community work. It should also mention strengthened training among specific population groups. Paragraph 1(5) should be amended to read “to introduce evidence-based health promotion interventions into current practice”. In paragraph 2(2), the last phrase, “including those caused by noncommunicable diseases” should be deleted and in paragraph 2(4), the word “multisectoral” should be inserted before “national”.

Professor TLOU (Botswana) welcomed the promise of strengthened health systems and the emphasis placed on primary health, which had lost ground to HIV/AIDS, severe acute respiratory syndrome and avian influenza. WHO’s activities to help implement the Bangkok Charter for Health

Promotion in a Globalized World were encouraging, including the framework for the health promotion strategy.

Recognizing the diverse changes in disease patterns and health determinants, Botswana had revised its pre-service health education curriculum, and was developing a new in-service training curriculum for community health workers.

Welcoming resolution EB120.R14, she requested WHO to provide technical assistance for health impact assessments to be carried out in the areas of health promotion and health education.

Mr EL BEY (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that threats to public health could no longer be contained within national or regional boundaries, and the international community had to meet the challenges of a globalized world. The countries of Africa were particularly concerned about the emergence of new diseases and the re-emergence of others. A system for early warning and rapid response was needed, and he commended the mandatory reporting requirements of the International Health Regulations (2005). No country could cope alone with the emergencies resulting from epidemics, and natural or environmental disasters. In 2006, 134 million people worldwide had been affected by such disasters, and more than 21 000 people had died as a result.

Welcoming the Director-General's commitment to promote health in Africa, he called for more financial assistance for the Region in order to make health systems flexible and medicines affordable. The African Region needed to strengthen its capacity for health promotion by developing strategies and managing the migration of trained medical personnel – a major challenge. Some African countries required support in preparing for the 7th Global Conference on Health Promotion, to be held in Kenya in 2009. States, international organizations, the private sector, civil society and nongovernmental organizations must work together for health promotion in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. He supported the resolution.

Dr MAAMOURI (Tunisia), commending WHO's work on eliminating inequities in health, said that the role of the health sector should be part of a multisectoral approach to health determinants. WHO must devise strategies that recognized the disparities between countries, since these disparities required both increased coordination between WHO and other international organizations, and the classification of countries according to their specific features.

Some countries faced concurrent health problems and needed support to address the many existing and emerging challenges they faced. Advanced monitoring systems would help to identify the determinants of such problems and develop plans to deal with them. He supported the draft resolution and invited countries to examine ways of increasing private sector funding for health sector activities, especially where the private sector exercised a negative impact on health. Within its collaborative programmes, WHO should allocate part of its budget to health promotion.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that health promotion was essential for sustainable development. The Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World rightly emphasized the social and economic determinants of health, because more than 60% of the disease burden in the Eastern Mediterranean Region was due to unhealthy lifestyles and high-risk activities. In order to implement effectively the measures in the resolution, health promotion strategies must be brought within existing health systems, and support provided by WHO and donors to build capacity for policies, planning and programme implementation. Mechanisms should be identified to close the gap in health-care provision between developing and developed countries, with particular attention to countries in special situations, such as Iraq.

Dr PHILLIPS (Trinidad and Tobago) said that the strategies of WHO's various health promotion initiatives underpinned her country's approach to health promotion, namely to improve the ability of individuals and communities to control, maintain and enhance their physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. The basis of the approach was: formulating public health policy; re-orienting health services; empowering communities to achieve well-being; creating supportive environments;

developing and increasing personal health skills; and building alliances, with special emphasis on the media. The approach, together with the strategic actions outlined in the Caribbean Charter for Health Promotion, were integrated into her country's health promotion plan. Best practices were contributing to identifying priorities, developing new interventions and strengthening local and regional initiatives.

Trinidad and Tobago had established a multisectoral health promotion council with responsibility for healthy policies in both public and private sectors. The council was overseeing a new national plan for health promotion, known as "healthy communities and municipalities", which was encouraging greater community involvement. Health promotion had been introduced into the curriculum for training doctors and nurses, and a policy on health and family life education was being implemented in primary schools. For 10 years, public education campaigns had concentrated on raising awareness of smoking, healthy lifestyles, responsible sexual behaviour, exercise and nutrition, self esteem and empowerment, mental health, food safety, and HIV/AIDS. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr HEIDARI (Islamic Republic of Iran) welcomed the renewed attention being given to health promotion. Unless gaps in social justice, responsibility, implementation and knowledge were bridged, the current inequalities in health between and within countries would persist. Only strategies that focused on the social determinants of health could improve the health of the world's most vulnerable people. Many sectors of society should be involved in developing and implementing national policies to address those social determinants.

Iran had experienced improvements in health indicators, but social factors continued to create differences in health status between poor and rich people and between rural and urban communities. The main priority for national health policy was to tackle the social determinants of health inequities, and current health sector reform was expected to address the issues of equity, quality, effectiveness, client satisfaction and fair financing in the health system. It was necessary to maintain the momentum, and provide Iranian policy-makers and civil society groups with the opportunity to draw on international experience and knowledge.

Dr UGRID MILINTANGKUL (Thailand) welcomed WHO's strong commitment to improving health promotion. The Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World was a significant step towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The marketing of unhealthy products, especially to women and children, should be regulated, and appropriate consumption of healthy products encouraged. In order to raise awareness among stakeholders of the impact of non-biomedical factors on health, forums should be conducted worldwide on the social determinants of health.

He suggested amending the draft resolution by adding at the end of paragraph 1(3) the words "and promoting constructive engagement for mutual interest"; at the end of paragraph 1(4) the words "and report result for improvement of health promotion problems. Publicize and feed into the planning system"; and at the end of paragraph 2(5) the words "as well as make the reports accessible to the public".

Ms GIBB (United States of America) highlighted the importance of health promotion in health and economic development. Her President's Healthier US initiative challenged all levels of stakeholders to take specific steps to eliminate disparities, increase life expectancy and improve the quality of life. Strong public-private partnerships had helped to maximize resources for health promotion; those resources were complemented by WHO initiatives such as the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and the Global Programme on Health Promotion Effectiveness. Health promotion that empowered people and communities was cost effective and sustainable. Clear data and indicators to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of different health promotion strategies helped policy-makers in allocating resources. She supported the draft resolution.

Dr FAKEYE (Nigeria) said that health promotion could improve health systems by enhancing prevention, reducing the disease burden, alleviating pressure on health facilities and reducing costs,

while making the systems more effective and responsive. In 2006, Nigeria had developed a national policy and strategic plan for health promotion. Assistance from WHO and development partners was needed to implement the plan.

The Secretariat's report should have included a reference to alcoholic drinks.

There was still a wide gap between health promotion initiatives and programmes on disease control, for instance on HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and noncommunicable diseases. Collaboration between them should be closer, both within governments and development agencies; this would also increase the chances of revitalizing primary health care.

Ms PINTO FERNÁNDEZ (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that health promotion could only succeed through an intersectoral approach, involving public participation and the re-orientation of health services. Her Government was determinedly pursuing the elimination of social inequities. It encouraged mass outreach health-care programmes, including prevention and health promotion, for people living in poor or isolated areas. Health promotion programmes improved access to health services for marginalized groups, tackled visual impairment and provided better dental care. Such programmes had improved the quality of life, empowered people and expanded access to health services. Venezuela was eager to share that experience and to collaborate with other countries. Another initiative, with the assistance of PAHO and WHO, would promote health and health education within schools; the number of smoke-free environments had also increased.

Commenting on the report, she said that the reduction of health inequalities, mentioned in paragraph 2, was not enough; they must be eliminated. As for the draft resolution, she suggested including in paragraph 1(3) the phrase "through every form of collective organization, including trade unions and employers' and other associations, especially those relating to public health".

Ms SONG Li (China) said that health promotion was a responsibility shared by the whole of society and should be strengthened in order to achieve the goals set out in the Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World. A global forum should be established to develop a framework for health promotion and to help Member States with capacity building. Even in an era of globalization, there were wide gaps between countries in terms of social and economic development. China would step up its technical exchanges in health promotion, and sought technical support and guidance from WHO. She supported the draft resolution.

Mr ASPLUND (Sweden) suggested amending the sixth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution by inserting the phrase ", notably in noncommunicable diseases," after "Recognizing that the dramatic changes of the global burden of disease".

Ms CAMARGO (Mexico), supporting the draft resolution, suggested including a new paragraph, to read: [URGES all Member States] "which have established national health policies incorporating health promotion as an essential element in addressing the social determinants of health, to exchange their experience in an effective manner with other countries in the process of doing so".

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) said that health promotion was the key to reducing health problems worldwide, and should be accorded greater resources if the goal of health for all were to be achieved. She suggested inserting, after the sixth preambular paragraph of the resolution, a new preambular paragraph reading: "Recognizing that health promotion contributes in achieving health for all".

Dr TAKAHASHI (Japan) said that in 2000 his Government had established a health promotion movement involving the public and private sectors and with targets for 2015, such as reducing risk factors for lifestyle-related diseases. A recent mid-term evaluation had shown that activities needed to be better focused, role sharing clarified, and cooperation with the industrial sector strengthened. WHO should continue to facilitate exchanges of experience. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr NYIKAL (Kenya) expressed concern that no assessment had been made of the impact on health of political and development policies instituted at global, regional and country levels. WHO's advocacy was important for ensuring that such policies did not adversely affect health. He proposed the addition of a new subparagraph to follow paragraph 2(6): "to advocate for the development of political, social and economic policies that impact positively on health".

His country was honoured to have been chosen to host the 7th Global Conference on Health Promotion.

Dr AL-DOUSARI (Kuwait) said that his country had clinics to promote health, as well as to treat disease. Health promotion should be based on sound evidence and data. He suggested including in paragraph 1(3), after "civil society", the words "especially persons or groups of good contribution", and the words "and improve" after "evaluate" in paragraph 1(4).

Mr HAZIM (Morocco) expressed his appreciation of the report, noting that globalization had triggered epidemiological, political and technological changes in the developing world. Growing inequality in the allocation of resources between the North and South heightened tensions and instability. Half the 5000 million people living in the developing world survived on less than US\$ 2 per day. They needed housing, food and a proper standard of living. The mortality rates among women and infants were high; how could WHO promote health in such conditions? Progress so far had been insufficient. In spite of the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights were too inflexible to improve countries' access to medicines under patent. It was unacceptable that the large pharmaceutical companies working on diseases such as tuberculosis should be able to monopolize drug production for certain diseases only. Cooperation between North and South was essential to strengthen human resources, promote transfer of technology and research, and encourage reform in the developing world.

Dr DAHL-REGIS (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Caribbean Community, supported the draft resolution and adjustments in resource allocation needed to tackle issues related to the social determinants of health, the inclusion of other sectors and partners, and the role of governments in health promotion. The Caribbean Community countries had embraced the tenets of the Ottawa and Bangkok Charters, which had led to the development of the Caribbean Charter for Health Promotion. However, in her area, the budget allocation for health promotion was low – in the Bahamas under 0.2% – and must be increased for health promotion at the global, regional and country levels. Her country had, in 2006, established a healthy lifestyles secretariat in order to tackle the various determinants of health.

WHO should increase support for health promotion in the Region of the Americas, including for work on the social determinants of health, intersectoral collaboration, policy development and strategic planning.

Dr ADDAI (Ghana) said that he welcomed recent efforts to scale up health promotion interventions known to be effective, but was concerned at the lack of investment in health promotion; such programmes in his country were generally underfunded. Healthy lifestyles could reverse or retard the degenerative process and prevent both communicable and noncommunicable diseases. Ghana was implementing a health and nutrition programme to promote healthy lifestyles and environments, and was willing to share its experience. WHO should provide support in that regard and should also develop successful models and approaches to health promotion, and facilitate their adoption by Member States.

He supported the draft resolution, but regretted that it did not focus clearly on the adoption of healthy lifestyles. He suggested the addition of a new subparagraph in paragraph 1, after paragraph 1(3), to read: "to reorient national public health systems towards the promotion and adoption of healthier lifestyles by individuals, families and communities".

Dr SALANIPONI (Malawi), commending the report, said that health promotion in Africa was vital to meeting the health-related development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. People were entitled to information and education on issues that affected their health, particularly in Africa where literacy was poor. His country had a health promotion policy at the district and community levels of primary health care.

Mr EINARSSON (Iceland) said that health promotion was the basis of primary health care and critical to the prevention and control of diseases. In 2008 the focus would be on health promotion, marking the 30th anniversary of the Declaration of Alma-Ata; furthermore, the theme of World Health Day in 2008 would be primary health care. Activities for health promotion and tackling issues concerning the determinants of health needed to be strengthened in all areas of WHO's work. He therefore supported the draft resolution as amended by the delegates of Germany and Kenya.

Dr CHAKIROU (Congo) said that, despite global efforts to promote health, countries were still facing many challenges. While some diseases, such as smallpox, had been eradicated, Africa, and notably his country, was seeing the emergence of such diseases as monkeypox and Ebola virus haemorrhagic fever. The Director-General had declared that WHO should be judged by its actions in favour of the health of Africans and of women, and he urged the Organization to grant more resources to Africa. He endorsed the draft resolution.

Dr SOLOFONIRINA (Madagascar), commending the comprehensive report, supported the draft resolution. Health promotion was a prerequisite for successful health programmes and for a country's development.

Dr LEVANTHAL (Israel) said that in the Bangkok Charter, health promotion included the important issues of health security and the social determinants of health, both of which were also important for the prevention of noncommunicable diseases. However, the concept of health promotion might have been broadened to a point where it duplicated WHO's work in all fields of health and primary care.

Dr LEAFASIA (Solomon Islands) said that the mass media in his country played an important role in health promotion and health education. The draft resolution should contain an explicit recognition of the role of the media.

Mr CAROLAN (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that his Federation aimed to scale up its health promotion activities by building on its current programmes. First aid and the recruitment of voluntary blood donors were two of the Federation's traditional programmes. Accident prevention and the safety of individuals and communities were integral to first-aid training. The trust built up by Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in governments and vulnerable communities, could contribute to the adoption of healthier lifestyles and behaviours. The International Federation's First Aid Day, on 8 September, provided opportunities for expanding health promotion activities.

Voluntary blood donation and health promotion had a natural link: by tapping into a nation's voluntary blood donor panel, authorities were able to include disease prevention and health promotion in the existing blood service infrastructure across all countries. Through such programmes, community organizations could help to implement the Bangkok Charter. His Federation, civil society, nongovernmental organizations and communities should be involved in setting up a global forum to follow up the Bangkok Charter, and prepare for the 7th Global Conference on Health Promotion.

Dr LE GALÈS-CAMUS (Assistant Director-General) acknowledged the many comments on the need to retain both the cross-cutting nature of health promotion, including it in all technical programmes for disease prevention and control, and the link between health promotion and the prevention of noncommunicable diseases, even though neither activity excluded the other. Health

promotion was itself something more than simply preventing risk factors for noncommunicable diseases. Actions to reduce risk factors should complement policies for improving the health of especially vulnerable groups; the results of work done by the Commission on Social Determinants of Health would enable WHO to make progress in that area.

Regarding the delegate of Israel's comment, the adoption of the Organization's long-term strategic plan would avoid any risk of duplication or overlapping activities. She noted that several delegates had asked the Secretariat to address particular needs, especially assessment of the impact of health promotion on health, and had called for national capacities to be strengthened.

The forthcoming World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education would provide an opportunity for health promoters in the international community to meet. She thanked the Government of Kenya for its support in organizing the 7th Global Conference on Health Promotion.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in view of the numerous amendments proposed to the resolution, the Secretariat should produce a revised version that could be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

It was so agreed.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the twelfth meeting, section 2.)

Integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO: draft strategy: Item 12.12 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R6, and A60/19)

Dr ANTEZANA ARANÍBAR (representative of the Executive Board) said that, at its session in January 2007, the Board had considered the draft strategy, which had been drawn up on the basis of broad consultation throughout WHO and with ministries of health and external experts. The Board had adopted resolution EB120.R6, which recommended a resolution to the Health Assembly.

Mrs REITENBACH (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, said that the candidate countries Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, as well as Switzerland, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, aligned themselves with her statement. She supported the draft resolution, which was the result of years of hard work by gender experts and others within the Secretariat and Member States.

Gender equality was necessary for economic growth and equitable social development. Gender-based inequities in health were not a natural consequence of biological difference; they were socially governed and therefore amenable to action. Unequal relations between men and women of all ages and their effects on health and access to health services could be transformed. The European Union had progressed towards gender equality, thanks to equal-treatment legislation, gender mainstreaming, specific measures for the advancement of women, action programmes, social and political dialogue and dialogue with civil society. Through the European Pact for Gender Equality and the road map for gender equality, 2006–2010, it had committed itself to action on gender equality in several areas, including health. Gender inequalities continued to damage the health of millions of girls and women globally. Tackling inequalities between women and men called for action outside and inside the health sector.

Health systems did not pay sufficient attention to the different needs of women and men when planning, budgeting for and providing health services. Although women accounted for more than half the formal health-care workforce, they lacked decision-making power and their contributions were often unrecognized and underpaid. Women and girls bore a disproportionate burden of care in the home and the community, frequently with adverse effects for their own health and well-being. Rectifying those inequalities was crucial. In addition, more research was needed into how biological and social differences between men and women influenced the manifestation, diagnosis, treatment, outcome and consequences of disease and ill-health, in order to ensure effective health care. Research

results based on studies of male subjects were often seen as universally applicable to women, which was not always the case.

Gender equality and gender equity in health required the coordinated, active participation of a broad variety of stakeholders at all levels. She strongly supported the strategic directions outlined in the report, especially the plans to use sex-disaggregated data and to conduct gender analysis whenever possible. However, most of the documents presented to the Health Assembly, including the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013, still lacked a gender-equality perspective when presenting statistics, analysis or indicators. What plans did the Secretariat have to make sure that governing bodies documents were gender-sensitive and gender-responsive? WHO should report regularly on its progress in implementing the gender strategy.

WHO should cooperate with the European Institute for Gender Equality, which promoted gender equality in all community and national policies by raising citizens' awareness of gender equality, and integrating a gender perspective in all policy areas. WHO should be active in support of the Institute's efforts.

Professor TLOU (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, commended the draft strategy. Over the years, United Nations instruments and conferences had highlighted the gender inequities and inequalities in all spheres of development. The Region had responded by, among other things, tackling gender inequities and inequalities in the context of health and survival for women and children. Many African countries had reviewed their legislation and included women in decision-making and governance. Some countries had also included men in programmes on child health and sexual and reproductive health.

In mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS, Africa had to confront the influence of gender disparities on health-seeking behaviours, particularly compliance with health advice and adherence to treatment regimens. Involving men was becoming a strategy for increasing uptake in the region of programmes involving prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and antiretroviral therapy. Men were also participating in community-based care, including for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Those were positive developments, representing progress towards the three health-related Millennium Development Goals.

She welcomed the tools developed by WHO for preparing legislation, and guiding the development of gender-sensitive programmes and interventions. Progress was often slow because of competing priorities and shortages of financial and human resources, especially gender-related competencies. The integration of gender equality and equity into WHO's strategic and operational planning would help Member States to make progress.

Gender had been misunderstood and misinterpreted by many, and African Member States needed support to develop capacities. She noted the strategic directions set forth in paragraphs 11 to 19 of the draft strategy, and looked forward to implementing it once adopted. She also welcomed the draft resolution but suggested inclusion of a time frame for identifying or recruiting specialist staff at headquarters, regional and country-office levels in order to drive the strategy forward. WHO's capacity for gender analysis and planning was crucial to implementing the strategy.

In Africa, patterns of behaviour, including health-seeking and gender inclusion or exclusion practices, were influenced by cultural and socioeconomic circumstances. Qualitative information would help the African States to develop programmes for different cultural groups. They committed themselves to collecting quality data and monitoring behavioural change in order to assist WHO in integrating gender analysis and action into its work.

Mr ROSALES (Argentina) supported the draft resolution in the light of the Millennium Development Goals. He welcomed WHO's proposals for mainstreaming gender equality and equity in its strategic and operational planning.

Dr MAAMOURI (Tunisia) noted that the report and the draft resolution drew attention to the importance of promoting gender equality through better health, giving women access to all health services and to the special needs of both women and men at all stages of life. His Government

likewise emphasized the importance of women's health, especially reproductive health and gynaecological treatment. Some diseases, especially those that had to be reported, affected men and women equally. It was therefore important to analyse the respective needs of men and women in other areas.

Since 2001, Tunisia had been setting up training courses on health in all provinces, and he was grateful to WHO for its help in that regard, especially in designing strategies, providing reference materials and assisting with assessment.

Dr NYIKAL (Kenya) said that the promotion of gender equity in health and development should guide the programmes of WHO and individual Member States. Gender disparities in health were unjust and were largely avoidable or amenable to change. The African Member States welcomed the draft resolution; however, they believed that there was a need to institutionalize gender analysis within the Secretariat and its Member States by building human capacities. They therefore proposed that in paragraph 3(4), the words "to build their capacity for gender analysis" should be inserted after "Member States".

Dr FAKEYE (Nigeria) welcomed the report and the draft resolution. National and international communities must ensure equal access for women and men of all ages to opportunities for achieving their full health potential. Over the preceding eight years in Nigeria, gender mainstreaming efforts had been made not only in the health sector, but also in the political sphere, with a view to achieving 30% representation of women in the Cabinet. Women had been appointed as ministers in finance, housing, education and defence. Nigeria was a federal country, and gender mainstreaming would only be introduced through consultation at all levels. Paragraph 8 of the report should begin by stating that WHO's support should enable Member States to design policies, plans, as well as health development actions, and that the words "both within WHO and respective Member States" should be inserted before "observed differences" in paragraph 16.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that gender equity needed to be pursued. Given its prominence in the Millennium Development Goals, there should be a parallel focus on empowerment of women and empowerment of the community as a whole. Social mobilization for primary health care would give greater prominence to gender issues by integrating health development with sustainable social and economic development. Capacity building for community-based initiatives should also take account of gender issues.

Mr DEL PICÓ (Chile) said that integrating gender analysis and actions into health work was a key to social justice. It made it possible to identify previously invisible health inequities and inequalities; clarify phenomena not to be explained otherwise; solve gender-based health problems; and stimulate favourable cultural change among health-sector personnel and the user population. However, the sociocultural construction of gender established an unequal power relationship between the sexes in all areas of life, with men and women at opposite ends of the spectrum. Policies must seek to eliminate that construct in order to achieve equal opportunities for women and men as biologically different entities. It could be confusing to speak of gender equality, and a different term might be needed.

He suggested several provisions in the draft resolution, namely that: Member States should articulate intersectoral policies that treated gender as a social determinant of health and quality of life; Member States should allocate the necessary resources for achieving gender equity in health, which meant applying gender analysis in the overall budgetary process carried out by ministries of finance; Member States should conduct surveys of how time was used, with emphasis on unpaid health care provided within the home, so as to inform policies on benefits that emphasized care in the home and equal sharing of domestic work; Member States should establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating gender equity policies in the health area, including resources allocated; Member States should encourage the general public to monitor gender policies in the health area in order to empower excluded groups; and, lastly, an additional subparagraph 3(8) should be inserted at the end of the

resolution, requesting the Director-General to identify and disseminate successful experiences in the area of policy impact, application of indicators, sex-disaggregated information systems, resource allocation research, labour practices and public involvement in policy matters.

Dr ASLANYAN (Canada) expressed support for the draft strategy and resolution and said that the Organization's role of helping Member States to fulfil their Beijing commitments must remain central. He welcomed WHO's efforts to implement the United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution on gender mainstreaming. Equality between women and men, and between girls and boys, was a human rights issue and essential to sustainable development, social justice, peace and security. WHO should develop a cross-cutting plan for putting the strategy into action in its programmes and activities, with a focus on results. He welcomed the Director-General's identification of women's health as a priority issue: it would greatly assist WHO's efforts in implementing the gender strategy.

The meeting rose at 13:00.

ELEVENTH MEETING

Monday, 21 May 2007, at 14:40

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO: draft strategy: Item 12.12 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R6, and A60/19) (continued)

Ms SONG Li (China) supported the goals and strategic directions identified in the report. Incorporating gender considerations into WHO's management and building the Organization's gender analysis and planning capacity would contribute to gender equality and health equity. Despite some progress, women remained a vulnerable group within society, and, in many places, women's health rights were not protected. China, one of the earliest signatories to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, was committed to the advancement of women and the improvement of their political, economic and social status. Her Government had prioritized women's health, and had enacted laws and regulations protecting women's rights to survival, development, education, employment and reproductive health services. Gender was a cross-sectoral issue. Its importance had not been realized by society, and it was necessary to sensitize people to gender issues and to act on the factors affecting and constraining gender equality. China welcomed the integration of gender analysis and planning into all aspects of WHO's work, and supported the draft resolution contained in EB120.R6.

Dr PHUSIT PRAKONGSAI (Thailand) appreciated WHO's commitment to addressing the health inequalities between men and women, and welcomed the goals and objectives, guiding principles and strategic directions set out in the report. Sex-disaggregation of data alone would not provide a full understanding of gender differences: qualitative research on culture, norms and practices was also needed in order to identify the factors underlying those differences. Accordingly, he proposed inserting in paragraph 2(5) of the draft resolution the words "and conduct research on underlying factors leading to gender inequality" between "sex-disaggregated data" and "and use".

Ms VIELMA (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) underscored the importance of WHO's decision to mainstream gender perspectives. Gender mainstreaming encompassed the entire planning process at all levels and for all activities. It should address the biological, socioeconomic and ethnic differences between men and women, not just their "concerns and experiences", as suggested in the Economic and Social Council's definition cited in the report. Health care should take account of differences in the risks facing men and women, and in their needs and socioeconomic circumstances. She supported the draft resolution.

Ms HALÉN (Sweden) said that the adoption of the draft resolution would be an important step towards realizing equality between women and men in health. She sought assurance that sufficient resources would be allocated in order to implement the strategy across the Organization. Gender equality was often misunderstood. In the interest of clarity, she proposed, in paragraph 2(4) of the draft resolution, replacing "gender-friendly health care" with "a gender equality perspective"; substituting, in paragraph 2(6), "as providers of health care" for "to health care"; and, in paragraph 3(5), inserting "including relevant documents presented to the Executive Board and Health Assembly"

after “publications”. The last amendment would ensure that the Secretariat was accountable to Member States.

Mr MARTIN (Switzerland) supported the draft strategy, but regretted that it did not give more attention to the support provided by women, often elderly women, to their communities in crisis situations, such as the AIDS pandemic. That unpaid burden often affected women’s health and should be studied from a gender equity perspective. He supported the draft resolution, but, bearing in mind that financing was an indicator of the priority accorded to an issue, proposed inserting “budgetary” before “planning” in paragraph 2(1). He also proposed inserting “including the corresponding budgets” between “plans” and “for integrating” in paragraph 3(4), and, in paragraph 2(4), replacing “care is” with “services are” (although amendment could be accommodated in the wording already proposed by the delegate of Sweden.)

Ms JOHRI (India) said that in India policy planning and implementation included gender budgeting as a first step towards integrating gender into health policies and programmes. A broad approach to narrowing gender gaps was being used. Sex selection and other practices that had an adverse effect on gender equality had been made illegal in order to prevent female feticide. India was not alone in requiring technical assistance for gender planning, budgeting and impact assessment. She suggested that paragraph 3(4) of the draft resolution should be amended accordingly.

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) said that the empowerment of women was one way of combating poverty. A coherent approach to gender and health must include strategies that related to men’s and women’s health. Both sexes should be treated with dignity and interventions tailored to their respective needs. The issues of gender and women’s health were linked to sexual and reproductive health and reflected social and cultural factors, including gender-based violence.

Dr TAKAHASHI (Japan) observed that addressing gender issues would yield benefits for children as well as women. He supported the draft resolution. Ensuring that health policies and indicators were feasible always needed consideration of the cultural background and values of each country or area.

Ms MALULEKE (South Africa) supported the draft strategy and would welcome the establishment of sustainable capacity-building partnerships and technical and financial support to Member States by the Secretariat in order to integrate gender equality in all health policies, programmes and research. She supported the amendment to the draft resolution proposed by the delegate of Sweden and her remarks regarding the allocation of adequate resources for implementation of the strategy. Sufficient resources should be made available for the disaggregation of information by sex and, in that connection, the Health Metrics Network should work closely with gender focal points in Member States.

Ms YUAN (United States of America) said that her Government was deeply committed to addressing women’s health needs, and data disaggregated by sex were essential to its programmes. Empowering women and educating girls about health were critical to achieving the goal of healthy and sustainable populations. Member States should respond collectively in order to meet the health needs of women globally, particularly underserved women. Availability of data and research that translated those data into practical applications at the country level should be emphasized. She supported the original text of the draft resolution but would need to see how it had changed as a result of the amendments proposed.

Dr SOLOFONIRINA (Madagascar) said that discrimination persisted in her country, as evidenced, for example, by lower levels of education among female heads of households in comparison with their male counterparts, a factor in women’s exclusion and poverty. Her Government promoted gender equality and economic independence for women as a means of combating poverty,

hunger and diseases. Signs of progress included the election of female mayors in rural communities, traditionally the exclusive preserve of men. She supported the draft resolution, but suggested that it should be accompanied by a timetable for the nomination or recruitment of gender focal points at all three levels of the Organization.

Dr CAMPBELL FORRESTER (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Caribbean Community, said that health services in the region had traditionally focused primarily on the health and well-being of mothers and children, and males had been somewhat marginalized. Many gains in health care worldwide had resulted from programmes geared towards women and children, and only recently, with the advent of HIV/AIDS, had the role of males in reproductive health been recognized. The identification of women's health as a priority was commendable, but more efforts and research should be directed towards elucidating men's health issues, their health-seeking behaviour and how they could better support women and families. The findings should be shared and used to develop policies aimed at achieving that end. She supported the draft resolution, but proposed amending paragraph 2(4) so as to incorporate the idea of gender-friendly health services for adolescents and youth, and, in paragraph 2(6), adding "and training for the health work force" after "health policy and planning".

Dr SALANIPONI (Malawi) said that Malawi used sex-disaggregated data for some of its health indicators. Of those people accessing the antiretroviral programme, 60% were women – a particularly encouraging figure, given that more young women than men contracted HIV infection, and care of AIDS patients was left to older women and young girls. He urged the Director-General to implement the draft strategy and to ensure that gender mainstreaming was universally applied. He supported the draft resolution, placing emphasis on paragraph 3(4), and called on the Director-General to allocate more funding for activities relating to women. He was pleased that the Director-General had placed the health of women at the centre of her work.

Mr MASUKU (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) welcomed the draft strategy, adding that it should highlight diseases linked to gender inequality, such as HIV/AIDS, and that national strategies should also take account of HIV/AIDS and consequent loss of livelihood. FAO had studied the link between nutrition, health and food security as well as ways of maintaining productive labour when active family members died or were incapacitated. In its gender-mainstreaming strategy, WHO should consider how men and women coped with the impact of disease and were able to sustain families without land and resources. FAO would collaborate with WHO in collecting and using sex-disaggregated data.

Mrs MAFUBELU (Assistant Director-General) acknowledged delegates' comments and strong support for the draft strategy and the draft resolution. She welcomed the progress made towards achieving gender equality, recognizing its importance, together with women's empowerment, in accelerating attainment of health-related Millennium Development Goals. WHO's mandate explicitly integrated gender analysis and actions into its work. A plan of action for implementing the draft strategy had been made available. WHO would explore collaboration with the European Institute of Gender Equality, to which the delegate of Germany had referred. The integration of a gender perspective into the mainstream of WHO's policies and programmes was a top priority of the Director-General, who had instructed that gender mainstreaming must be considered in all activities and at all levels of the Organization. Appropriate staff would be identified or recruited. The Secretariat would also ensure that sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis were included in WHO's documents. She had noted that paragraph 3(7) of the draft resolution requested the Director-General to report every two years to the Health Assembly.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director General) read out the proposed amendments to the draft resolution. In paragraph 2(1), "strategic and operational" should be replaced by "strategic, operational and budget". The amendments to paragraph 2(4) suggested by Sweden and Switzerland

would be amalgamated as: “to ensure that a gender-equality perspective is incorporated in all levels of health-care services and delivery”. In paragraph 2(5), Thailand had suggested the insertion of “and conduct research on underlying factors leading to gender inequality” between “sex-disaggregated data” and “and use”. In paragraph 2(6), Sweden had proposed replacing “to health care” with “as providers of health care” after “and boys”, and adding “and training for the health workforce” at the end of the paragraph. In paragraph 3(3), Botswana had suggested inserting “as soon as possible” after “recruiting staff”. Amendments proposed by India, Kenya, Niger and Switzerland to paragraph 3(4) could be combined to read: “to provide support to Member States to build their capacity for gender analysis and actions and for formulating and sustaining strategies and action plans, including relevant budgets, for integrating gender equality in all health policies, programmes and research”. In paragraph 3(5), “including relevant documents presented to the Executive Board and World Health Assembly” should be added after “publications”. Chile had suggested an additional paragraph, which would be inserted between paragraphs 3(6) and 3(7), to read: “to identify and disseminate good practices on the impact of integrating gender in health policies, including the development of indicators and health information systems that disaggregate data by sex”.

The CHAIRMAN, in response to a request from Ms YUAN (United States of America), said that a revised version of the draft resolution, incorporating the amendments read out, would be prepared for consideration by the Committee at a later meeting.

It was so agreed.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the twelfth meeting, section 2.)

Workers’ health: draft global plan of action: Item 12.13 of the Agenda (Documents A60/20 and A60/20 Add.1)

Mrs REITENBACH (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, said that the candidate countries of Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process, and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine aligned themselves with her statement. She welcomed the consultations held and the improved draft resolution. However, the draft global plan of action should better reflect the need for close collaboration between WHO and ILO; the first bullet point in paragraph 30 should therefore be amended to read: “promoting and engaging in partnerships and joint action with ILO and other organizations of the United Nations system, employers, organizations, trade unions and other stakeholders in civil society and the private sector in order to strengthen international efforts on workers’ health”. At the beginning of the second bullet point, “in coherence with the actions undertaken by ILO” should be added.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that, in order for occupational health services to become an integral part of primary health care, there needed to be: an effective information system; provision of services for workers within their catchment areas; capacity building in occupational health; a comparable standard in the quality of both public and private occupational health services, as well as intersectoral collaboration; and labour legislation covering occupational health services.

Dr TAKAHASHI (Japan) said that his Government had long recognized the importance of workers’ health, and employers were required to appoint an industrial physician in order to provide health care. Since 2001, health, labour and welfare issues had been addressed by the same ministry, enabling comprehensive measures to be taken to protect and promote the health of workers. Referring to paragraph 3(2) of the draft resolution contained in document A60/20, he emphasized collaboration between WHO and ILO. Japan would be willing to provide technical assistance to WHO.

Mr DJEDOSSOUM (Chad), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, said that workers' health was of key importance for productivity and the overall health of an economy. The draft global plan of action should take into account living conditions and working environments, which, in developing countries, were being badly damaged by the migration of skilled workers. The health status of workers depended on hygiene and sanitation, levels of environmental and health protection, and investment in health and human resources. The draft global plan of action should cover both formal and informal workers and independent workers. Its implementation would require high political commitment in order to develop specific programmes and ensure funding and consistency in the treatment of human resources in both the private and public sectors. He called on the Secretariat, ILO and all partners to assist Member States in implementation, and highlighted the need for intersectoral collaboration and local and international partnerships.

The African Region was ready to adopt the global plan of action, provided the following points were taken into account: the possible need to modify legislation in line with the draft global action plan; financing of workers' health protection; legislative and management mechanisms for increasing efficiency and productivity, thereby reducing international migration and the brain drain; and reliable provision of data on health and safety at work, and a health monitoring and assessment system for sharing experiences and good practice. He called for guidelines to facilitate implementation of the global plan.

Dr GONZÁLEZ (Cuba) said that the report covered the major actions to improve health protection of workers, many of which had already been implemented in Cuba with a current focus on improving occupational health coverage, health promotion and accident prevention at the primary health-care level. Support for the strategy at the international level would improve the lives of workers and human and social development. The draft resolution rightly urged Member States to work towards full coverage of all workers. The plan of action should be implemented and results evaluated.

Professor PEREIRA MIGUEL (Portugal) said that the electronic consultations had resulted in a stronger draft global plan of action. Referring to paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, he expressed a preference for the word "endorses". Millions of migrant workers took on jobs with high risks, were often exploited, lived in unhealthy conditions and had difficult access to health services. He welcomed the reference to migrant workers in paragraph 2(2). Attention should be paid to occupational cancers, exposures to chemicals, asbestos and heavy metals, and problems arising from HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Portugal would support the implementation of the global plan of action.

Dr OLIVEROS (Philippines) said that her country's labour force, estimated at 34 million in 2003, represented some 42% of the population. Nearly 9% of those working in service industries were health workers and some 8 million were migrant workers. Poor working conditions and terms of employment were compounded by the increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS among migrant workers, which led to repatriation, stigmatization and poverty. The Philippine Overseas Labor Offices provided medical and psychosocial support to overseas workers; there was also a network of resource centres for the protection and promotion of workers' welfare. She supported the draft global plan of action and proposed that the draft resolution should be amended by adding a new paragraph 2(6) that would read, "to develop national and intercountry strategic approaches in providing medical care and services for sick and injured migrant workers", and a new paragraph 2(7) that would read "to encourage development of comprehensive health and non-health strategies to ensure reintegration of sick and injured workers to the mainstream of society in coordination with different government and nongovernment organizations". She further proposed that in paragraph 3(2) "the International Organization for Migration and other international organizations" should be inserted after "ILO", and that a new paragraph 3(4) should be added that would read, "to support capacity building for interstate/intercountry coordination and information management concerning health of migrant workers".

Dr SOPIDA CHAVANICHKUL (Thailand) endorsed the draft global plan of action and the draft resolution. She proposed that the words “including reproductive and family health” should be inserted in paragraph 14 of the plan of action after “health promotion”. Because evidence for action and practice, considered under Objective 4 of the plan of action, was not mentioned in the draft resolution, a new paragraph 2(5) should be added that would read: “to generate evidence on workers’ health and to translate this evidence into policy and actions”. Since the plan of action did not refer to any indicators or schedule for implementation, the words “with definite timeline and indicators for the achievement of global occupational health services” should be added at the end of paragraph 3(1). WHO should increase collaboration with ILO.

Dr SULEIMAN (Oman), speaking on behalf of the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, observed that workers’ health was vital for national socioeconomic development. There were many opportunities for work in his region and many workers from other countries were employed by contractors and subcontractors. He therefore proposed that “contract workers” should be added to paragraph 2(2) of the draft resolution after “migrant workers”.

Mrs BELLA ASSUMPTA (Cameroon) emphasized the importance of protecting health-care workers, especially in the developing countries, since they were frequently exposed to communicable diseases, infectious biological products and ionizing radiation, and were often overworked. She therefore proposed that the words “including health-care workers” should be added at the end of paragraph 2(3) of the draft resolution.

Dr AHMED (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, welcomed the revised draft global plan of action. Workers in his Region represented 45% to 50% of the population and their health needs should be given priority. The workplace should be safe and healthy; it could also be a setting for coordinated health interventions. The draft global plan of action should strengthen the protection and health of workers, their families and the community.

Since the endorsement of the WHO global strategy for occupational health for all in 1996, the Member States of the Region had strengthened workers’ health programmes at regional and national levels, despite scarce resources. However, intersectoral coordination, resources, and coverage of occupational health services remained inadequate. The countries of the Region should transform obstacles into opportunities by combining an occupational approach with health promotion, reaching out to families and communities through the working population, and suggest practical occupational models for health services. Intersectoral coordination should be strengthened at all levels, making effective use of scarce human and financial resources and avoiding duplication of effort. He supported the draft global plan of action and draft resolution.

Mr DEL PICÓ (Chile) endorsed the draft global plan of action. Chile was preparing a plan of action in order to reduce occupational diseases and accidents and improve workers’ quality of life. The plan gave priority to vulnerable groups and facilitated access to occupational health services independently of social security coverage, whether public or private. Migrant workers were also covered. Chile had also incorporated in its programmes the occupational health recommendations of WHO and ILO, such as those of the ILO/WHO global programme for the elimination of silicosis as an occupational health problem by 2030.

Professor KEVAU (Papua New Guinea) welcomed the draft global plan of action and supported the draft resolution. However, neither text mentioned the health and safety of local communities that hosted industrial and commercial activities, including mining and plantations, an aspect of health that was often ignored by project planners. He therefore proposed that the matter should be reflected in the plan of action and that the draft resolution should be amended by inserting “in the local communities” after “workers” in the penultimate paragraph of the preambular section; after “workers” in paragraph 2(1); and after “workers” in paragraph 2(5). He further proposed the addition of a new paragraph 3(4)

to read: “to develop and make available to Member States specific guidelines for the establishment of appropriate health services and monitoring tools for human and environmental hazards and diseases introduced to local communities where commercial activities are established and that their needs are met”.

Mr POMOELL (Finland) endorsed the draft global plan of action, which provided a good basis for the further development of occupational health services. Drawing attention to paragraph 10 of the plan, he said that a global ban on all uses of asbestos would ensure the elimination of asbestos-related diseases. The plan’s emphasis on promotion of the working ability of older people was timely, given the demographic changes taking place in industrialized countries. He drew attention to ILO Convention 161, adopted in 1985, and to the new concept of basic occupational health services, developed by the ILO/WHO Joint Committee on Occupational Health in 2003, which provided guidance on the provision of occupational health services, especially for underserved groups and developing countries. The network of WHO collaborating centres provided support in occupational health activities at the national, regional and global levels. Finnish institutions would participate in the network and the implementation of the global plan of action.

Dr SHEVYREVA (Russian Federation) said that global campaigns to eliminate asbestos-related disease were important, but Member States should adopt a scientific approach to the elimination of harmful forms of asbestos. Paragraph 10 of the plan of action should therefore be amended by adding a sentence reading: “In conducting global campaigns to eliminate asbestos-related diseases, it is essential to take into account a differentiated approach in regulating the various forms of asbestos, such as those mentioned in the Rotterdam Convention”.

Ms PINTO FERNÁNDEZ (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her Government was developing risk prevention in the workplace and promulgating health and safety legislation. The National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety had issued a technical guide and was preparing minimum health and safety standards. Surveys of work conditions were being undertaken and plans for the protection of construction workers and for the health and safety of women working in the home were also being prepared. Special medical attention was given to persons who had experienced occupational accidents, and information, education and communication activities were raising awareness of occupational health. She would submit comments on the draft global plan of action in writing.

Mrs SCHAER BOURBEAU (Switzerland) supported the draft resolution and the main thrust of the draft global action plan, as well as the amendment to paragraph 30 proposed by the delegate of Germany. Switzerland accorded high priority to the health of its population and, in particular, its workers. Good health was crucial for economic prosperity and sustainable development. Access to occupational health services should be improved, but social and individual factors, training in primary health care and proper housing were also important. The international organizations responsible for health and protection of workers, WHO and ILO, respectively, should join forces in order to implement the global plan of action. Workers’ and employers’ organizations should also be involved in the implementation of the plan at the global and national levels.

Mrs PANTAZOPOULOU (Greece) said that the draft global action plan should contribute to the expansion of occupational health services and the strengthening of health systems. Early diagnosis of occupational diseases and the collection of comparable data were important. The family and social life of workers must also be taken into consideration. She proposed that in paragraph 2(1) of the draft resolution the word “execution” should be replaced by “implementation”, and requested clarification of the term “informal economy” used in paragraph 2(2).

Dr CARBALLO QUESADA (Costa Rica) welcomed the draft global plan of action. Costa Rica’s Occupational Health Council was revising its strategic plan for the period up to 2010 for

coordination among government institutions, trade unions and employers' organizations involved in occupational health. Emphasis was placed on the follow-up and monitoring of programmes and projects. Guides had been prepared for use in schools. Physical exercise and healthy lifestyles in the workplace were being piloted in the Ministry of Labour.

She proposed that the basic training of health professionals should be included in paragraph 18 of the draft global plan of action, as "postgraduate training" was not sufficiently broad.

Ms YUAN (United States of America) observed that the issues surrounding workers' health and safety were complex and multisectoral, requiring the engagement of ministries of labour and commerce, and public and private employers. The Secretariat, in collaboration with relevant international organizations, could help Member States to implement a plan of action, including surveillance systems for workers' health, data on occupational diseases for policy-makers, and capacity for public health prevention and intervention strategies. Member States should consider the draft global plan of action within their own national contexts. The plan should provide flexibility and guidance over time.

She preferred the word "welcomes" to "endorses" in the first paragraph of the draft resolution, as Member States had yet to hold a separate review of the plan of action at country level. She could not support the amendments proposed by the delegate of Thailand to paragraph 14 of the draft plan of action, which text had been carefully negotiated in the electronic consultation between Member States, nor could she support the proposal to include reproductive and family health in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution because it would dilute the resolution and loosen its focus on workers' health.

Ms USIKU (Namibia) said that her country still needed to improve and strengthen the planning, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of occupational health services and employee assistance programmes, so as to benefit all workers in the public and private sectors. The draft global plan of action provided a useful framework and guidance in that regard. She endorsed the report and draft resolution. Namibia looked forward to technical support from WHO in preparing its strategic plan of action.

Dr NYIKAL (Kenya) observed that many aspects of workers' health, such as occupational accidents and exposure to toxic or carcinogenic compounds, had legal implications, which often led employers to limit treatment or attempt to cover up injuries or illnesses. Legal frameworks were necessary to tackle that problem. He therefore proposed inserting the words "and legal frameworks" after the word "mechanisms" in paragraph 2(1) of the draft resolution. The aspect should also be covered in the global plan of action.

Dr NDELU (South Africa) said that her country had already implemented some of the actions recommended in the draft global plan of action, while others still required the formulation of plans. Member States should develop legislation in line with ILO conventions. South Africa had promulgated legislation on occupational health and safety in 1993, and mine health and safety legislation in 1996. It had also made good efforts towards preventing asbestos-related diseases and silicosis, asbestos mining having ended in South Africa in 2003; tobacco-control legislation was already in place. She emphasized the need for more effective occupational health and safety collaborating centres in developing countries, and endorsed the draft global plan of action.

Mr KHALEEL (Maldives) endorsed the draft global plan of action. Pregnant women and lactating mothers should be specifically mentioned as a vulnerable group in paragraph 9. He emphasized the need for strong collaborating centres, and endorsed the draft resolution.

Mr ABUSAA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) supported the proposal by the delegate of Oman to include a reference to contract workers in the draft resolution.

Ms KAZRAGIENE (Lithuania) said that the draft global plan of action covered all aspects of workers' health. She supported the objectives of the plan, in particular Objective 3, and the diagnosis of occupational diseases which, together with standardized statistics, was important in providing evidence for action.

Official statistics on occupational diseases were often inadequate for formulation of national prevention policies, primarily because of gross under-reporting of occupational injuries. Therefore, work on the harmonization of statistics on occupational illness should be intensified by the Secretariat and Member States. She strongly advocated the regional networking of stakeholders, whose responsibilities could include generating evidence for policy-making, monitoring and evaluation. Collaboration in establishing norms and standards for the health workforce, including internationally agreed definitions, classification systems and indicators, was also important.

She endorsed the views of previous speakers on the need to tackle asbestos-related health problems. In its capacity as chair of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-Being, Lithuania would return to the subject of occupational safety and health at a high-level conference in Vilnius in November 2007.

Dr KARAGULOVA (Kazakhstan) supported the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation to paragraph 10 of the draft global plan of action. Attention needed to be paid to the elimination of asbestos in developing countries and countries with transition economies. A differentiated approach to the regulation of different types of asbestos and materials containing asbestos would be required for a global campaign to eliminate asbestos-related diseases. WHO should conduct an additional technical study in that area, taking into account the latest scientific information. Kazakhstan would work with the Secretariat on that issue.

Ms WISEMAN (Canada) supported the draft global plan of action, but expressed concern about the plan as it related to the use of chrysotile asbestos. While supporting WHO's goal to prevent and eliminate asbestos-related diseases, she encouraged WHO to consider all the scientific evidence, including risk-management approaches such as controlled use, in minimizing risks to the health of workers. Canada remained committed to working with the Secretariat and other health experts in order to ensure that the strategies regarding chrysotile were based on the latest science. Canada would share its considerable experience of controlled-use approaches.

Mr GAUDÊNCIO (Brazil) endorsed the draft plan of action and the draft resolution.

Dr AL-TUWAIJRI (International Labour Organization) said that ILO and WHO had a common definition of occupational health and coordinated their activities efficiently, particularly in the context of the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health. Cooperation between ILO and WHO would lead to a multidisciplinary and intersectoral approach to occupational health and prevention in a globalized world. The core of ILO's action was the preparation of international labour conventions, which provided the legal framework for developing policies and programmes for occupational health practice on a tripartite basis. The Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) promoted strengthening of national occupational safety and health infrastructures. ILO had also contributed to the preparation of the draft global plan of action on workers' health.

Together ILO and WHO could reach all the key stakeholders at the national level: their approaches were convergent, complementary and mutually supportive. Both were committed to the common goals of improving the working environment and providing occupational health for all. The proposed plan of action would boost prevention at all levels in Member States of both Organizations.

ILO fully supported the adoption of the draft resolution and was strongly committed to cooperation with WHO on successful implementation of the global plan of action.

Ms CALDWELL (International Council of Nurses), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that her statement reflected the views of more than 25 million health professionals

worldwide. Underinvestment in the health sector, and poor employment conditions and policies, had led to a deterioration in working conditions in many countries, negatively affecting recruitment and retention of health personnel, the performance of health facilities and, ultimately, patient outcomes.

She supported measures to promote the health, safety and well-being of health workers, particularly vulnerable groups such as migrant health workers. The work environment must be made safe from occupational hazards. Management practices must support the well-being of workers as well as patient safety, ensuring manageable workloads and lower stress levels. Such issues were the responsibility of all stakeholders in the health sector. In 2007, the health professions, together with the Global Health Workforce Alliance and the International Hospital Federation, would launch a campaign for safe and healthy workplaces for health workers. She called upon WHO to join them in that effort.

Dr HATCHER (World Federation of Public Health Associations), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that much of the global burden of disease was caused by poor working conditions. She supported the draft global plan of action because it set out a realistic, long-term programme to deal with occupational cancer, chemicals, asbestos and contamination with heavy metals, as well as HIV/AIDS. The plan recognized the importance of employment, sustainable development, poverty reduction and environmental protection. It made workers the focus of training and consultation in building capacity. It included representatives of both workers and employers in action to reduce inequalities in workers' health, identified responsibilities of health professionals, and promoted access to services for the working people of the world.

Her organization would participate in the implementation of the global plan of action through the network of WHO collaborating centres in occupational health.

Professor GUILLEMIN (International Commission on Occupational Health), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, supported the draft global plan of action. There were on average one million occupational injuries and half a million cases of occupational disease every day, nearly all of which were preventable, as the zero-risk programmes introduced by some industries had shown. The industries where the coverage of occupational health services was lowest were precisely the ones where they were most needed. The needs of workers in agriculture, small-scale enterprises and the informal sector, as well as of self-employed and migrant workers were particularly great. There were 2000 million of those workers worldwide, who faced a high level of risk and had virtually no access to occupational health services. International guidance, collaboration and technical support were needed to assist them.

Developed countries needed the global plan of action in order to guide them in dealing with new occupational diseases, including stress, musculoskeletal disorders and occupational allergies, as well as potential global epidemics connected with occupations such as animal husbandry or food production. Health workers were a high-risk group in their own right. Constant changes in working life continually threw up new risks, which must be researched and assessed. WHO and its regional offices should stimulate research, compile scientific knowledge, assess the data collected and disseminate it at national level in a form in which it could be easily incorporated into everyday practice. His organization would support WHO in the implementation of the global plan.

Ms WEBER-MOSDORF (Assistant Director-General) thanked Member States for their support for the draft global plan of action. Twenty-nine Member States of all levels of development and from all regions had responded to the electronic consultations conducted during the preparation of the plan.

She had noted delegates' comments on the need to prioritize the primary prevention of occupational hazards, with integrated action to protect the most vulnerable groups, including migrants, children and pregnant women; the need to take into account the ageing of societies and links between occupational health and other public health programmes, such as nutrition, mental health, substance abuse and communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and severe acute respiratory syndrome; the risk to health workers of communicable diseases; the need for strong intersectoral

linkages; and concerns regarding the elimination of asbestos-related diseases, especially in the light of resolution WHA58.22 on cancer prevention and control.

With regard to the respective roles of WHO and ILO, the global plan of action would provide a framework for strengthening cooperation between the two organizations and other international agencies. The Secretariat would take into account all relevant Conventions and concert its activities with other specialized agencies of the United Nations.

WHO and its partners could achieve primary prevention in occupational health. Every year, about two million people died as a result of occupational accidents or exposure to harmful substances, but only a tiny proportion of them had access to occupational health services. Workers were more mobile, and many more worked without formal employment contracts or social security coverage. The global plan of action should encourage health protection policies and primary prevention of occupational hazards.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Secretariat should prepare a revised version of the draft resolution, incorporating the amendments proposed to the resolution and the draft global plan of action, for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

It was so agreed.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the twelfth meeting, section 2.)

Health systems: emergency-care systems: Item 12.14 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R4, and A60/21)

Dr ANTEZANA ARANÍBAR (representative of the Executive Board), introducing the item, said that the Board had adopted resolution EB120.R4, which recommended a draft resolution to the Health Assembly. The term “emergency-care systems” had been preferred to “emergency-care services” because of the need to emphasize the scale of provision required and the need for sustainability.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that accidents and injuries were particularly serious for low-income and middle-income countries, which frequently lacked prehospital and trauma-care systems. Many people used emergency services in non-urgent cases because of the shortage of primary health-care services – a situation which the countries of his Region wished to study in more depth. Clearly, those services should also be strengthened.

Many deaths and much long-term disability could be prevented by strengthening trauma services and emergency care. The challenges facing the Region included the lack of attention paid to emergency care in reform of health systems and investment.

He supported the draft resolution. An interagency committee should be set up to coordinate support for countries which suffered man-made or natural disasters and promote investment in their emergency systems and trauma care. WHO should focus on simple techniques and less costly methods for saving lives. All relevant sectors should be involved in trauma care, particularly at the prehospital stage. WHO should invest in capacity building and document experiences.

Strengthening a country’s trauma-care system would help to strengthen its health system as a whole and contribute to regular and sustainable development of the primary health-care system at all levels.

Mr PINKAS (Poland) said that an emergency-care system should be based on education of the general public, logistical support that facilitated access to emergency care, and cooperation between the medical and nonmedical emergency services. Those principles of emergency care had been introduced in his country earlier in the year. A legal base was crucial to creating an efficient

emergency-care system flexible enough to expand to meet future needs. His country would be glad to share its experiences with others. He supported the draft resolution.

Professor TLOU (Botswana) said that, following her country's urbanization, trauma had become the second greatest cause of mortality and morbidity after HIV/AIDS, with dire economic consequences. Every year, there were 18 deaths for every 10 000 vehicles on the road, including many productive members of the community. The Ministry of Health was preparing a national policy on prehospital care. The Secretariat should support Member States in establishing training centres for paramedics; in Botswana, that would improve the standard of prehospital care and release more nurses for patient care.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the twelfth meeting, section 2.)

The meeting rose at 17:30.

TWELFTH MEETING

Tuesday, 22 May 2007, at 09:55

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

1. FOURTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE A (Document A60/59)

Mrs BU FIGUEROA (Honduras), Rapporteur, read out the draft fourth report of Committee A.

Dr ASSOGBA (Benin) observed that the amendment he had proposed for paragraph 5 of the draft resolution on tuberculosis control had not been reflected in the text. He would submit wording in writing to the Secretariat.

The report was adopted.¹

2. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Health systems: emergency-care systems: Item 12.14 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R4, and A60/21) (continued from the eleventh meeting)

Dr OPART KARNKAWINPONG (Thailand) said that health systems should ensure equitable access to affordable services that responded to the needs of the population, that were sustainable through optimal use of primary care, and that were supported by referral and systems for health promotion and disease prevention.

He supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R4. Regrettably, without adequate funding for the necessary infrastructure, training in emergency care and daily operations, trauma and emergency-care services would not become a reality.

Dr VÁSCONEZ (Ecuador) emphasized collaboration between institutions and sectors in the planning of emergency-care systems that best used all the resources available in the sector. Ecuador was currently extending coverage of primary, prehospital and community health care in order to reduce the number of unnecessary hospital admissions. It was increasing the numbers of medical staff and upgrading the ambulance fleet. All basic hospitals provided emergency services and had trauma departments.

She proposed that, after paragraph 2(4) of the draft resolution, wording should be inserted to the effect that the national health authority should determine the licensing or authorization standards for trauma and emergency-care services as part of the interinstitutional and intersectoral network. In paragraph 2(4), the phrase “to provide improved pertinent information” should be inserted after the words “to ensure that a monitoring mechanism exists”. In paragraph 2(10) the word “methods” should be replaced by “aspects”.

¹ See page 311.

Ms VIELMA (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her country had launched media campaigns and other measures to reduce the high number of road-traffic crashes and deaths on the roads particularly during holiday periods. The health service provided training in emergency care for hospital staff and post-trauma rehabilitation services which were free of charge. Moreover, the Government had concluded several international agreements in order to equip health centres with high technology. She supported the draft resolution.

Dr AYDINLI (Turkey) emphasized that analysis and planning, intersectoral cooperation, system development and sustainability were priorities for improving emergency-care systems. In Turkey, emergencies were reported on a toll-free telephone line and casualties were taken by fully equipped ambulance to one of the 1178 emergency-care centres established nationwide. He supported the draft resolution and called for support for Member States in improving their casualty-management systems and reviewing the relevant legislation.

Professor FAIZ (Bangladesh) said that, although he welcomed the draft resolution, both its title and content should refer to emergencies other than road-traffic injuries.

In Bangladesh, emergency care was provided in hospitals or in one of the five trauma centres set up to respond to road-traffic injuries. Services for other types of emergencies, including the establishment of a burns unit, training at community level and for health-care professionals in treatment for snake bites, pesticide poisoning and drowning had been implemented. Crisis centres had also been opened for female victims of violence. Despite all those measures, emergency-care systems in his country remained inadequate.

Dr FAKEYE (Nigeria) said that weak national health systems must be strengthened if adequate emergency care was to be provided. Moreover, all barriers, whether financial, related to gender, religious or cultural, must be removed in order to ensure access to emergency care for all who required it.

He supported the draft resolution, but proposed that in paragraph 2(3) the words “in locations where they would be cost-effective” should be deleted, since they could dissuade governments from establishing the relevant systems in such areas, despite a high rate of injury. In paragraph 3(2), he proposed the insertion of the words “policy and” after “techniques for reviewing”, and the addition at the end of the paragraph of the phrase: “and to use such institutional capacity to assist Member States, upon request, to review and update their policies and legislation”. A new subparagraph under paragraph 3 should also be added, that would read: “to work with Member States to design strategies for providing on a regular basis, optimal non-emergency and emergency care to all those in need; and to provide support to Member States for mobilizing adequate resources from donors and development partners to achieve this goal”.

Mr KAYITAYIRE (Rwanda), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, said that, other than poverty, the main hindrance to progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in Africa was the poor functioning of many health systems. Furthermore, the effectiveness of measures taken to tackle major health issues depended on health systems, and particularly emergency care. Advocating free treatment in order to improve access to health care for the largest number of people was not necessarily a sustainable solution. In Africa, health systems depended on the State, and faced obstacles such as the presence of remnants of former systems, the lack of social security and health insurance schemes, and scarcity of resources.

The main causes of the high rates of mortality and disability in Africa were road-traffic injuries, violence, poisoning, injuries, drowning and burns. The lack of access to emergency care increased premature deaths, as few countries were able to provide emergency and prehospital care.

He called for development partners to support the plan of action on health drawn up at the fifty-third session of the Regional Committee for Africa. One strategic orientation for WHO's action in the African Region in 2005–2009 was the strengthening of policies and systems to improve health care at local levels. To that end, WHO should target its action in Africa to building capacity and

sharing experience; the revitalization of emergency health care was essential. Primary prevention remained most important in reducing the burden of trauma cases. The measures already taken by WHO had been fruitful, but further financial and technical support was necessary for the implementation of national health plans, the retention of skilled health personnel, and strengthening of prehospital and emergency-care systems.

He called for cooperation between Africa's main development partners, especially WHO and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, in strengthening health systems and hospital reform, incorporating emergency care into medical training, the procurement of ambulances, the upgrading of emergency communication systems, and care and rehabilitation for victims of violence.

Mr EKEKE MONONO (Cameroon) said that Cameroon was preparing a violence and injury prevention plan based on the tools proposed by the Secretariat. It had already set up a prehospital emergency-care system covering the two main cities and the major road linking them, where many fatal road crashes occurred, and intended to extend the system to the rest of the country. The Secretariat should support Member States that had improved their emergency-care systems and had established prevention programmes for violence and injury. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) said that emergency care should be a component of national health-care systems, with a focus on practical interventions. Primary prevention remained most important for reducing rates of death, injury and long-term disability. Health-care curricula should include training in emergency care, with provision for continuing education. The burden of injuries could only be reduced if an emergency-care system was in place. She supported the draft resolution.

Dr MIYOSHI (Japan) said that an integrated and intersectoral approach to emergency care would correspond well to the current strategy of strengthening health systems as a whole. There was a need for sustainable, low-cost systems. The increasing importance of emergency-care systems to developing countries should be matched by strengthening those systems through international cooperation, taking into account the medical level, infrastructure and socioeconomic status of the region or country concerned. Since 1977, Japan had been establishing an integrated emergency service, including transportation, and was keen to share its experience, as it had done with Bolivia and Viet Nam. He supported the draft resolution.

Ms CAMARGO (Mexico) said that in Mexico around 53 000 people died and more than 2.5 million were treated each year under the national health system as a result of road-traffic or other injuries and violent behaviour. Pursuant to resolution WHA57.10, Mexico had introduced prehospital emergency care in order to guarantee access to treatment. An emergency control centre had been set up. Work was under way in order to establish curricula and qualifications in emergency medicine, refresher courses for medical, paramedical and administrative staff, and standardized procedures. Mexico was strengthening emergency and trauma care at federal and state level. She supported the draft resolution.

Mr ZHOU Jun (China) said that emergency services in China had been integrated into the social security system. In order that county-level hospitals could make a significant contribution to providing emergency care in rural areas, those institutions had been strengthened. Emergency services could not be provided by trauma centres alone. Rather, networks of emergency service should be established, for smaller geographical areas, with short response times, and involving the health, public security, transport and insurance sectors. The general public should be educated in first aid so that assistance could be provided even more quickly in an emergency. The Secretariat should propose follow-up measures, and support for developing countries should be forthcoming from developed countries.

Professor IANCU (Romania) said that deaths from injury were on the increase and that, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries, injury was the main cause of disability. Her Government was strengthening the trauma-care system as the best way to save lives. Since 2006, specific legislation on trauma and emergency care had been in place, covering both the public and private sectors. Training and specialization of medical staff was a major concern. She supported the draft resolution as it stood.

Mr BELGHITI ALAOUI (Morocco) said that the draft resolution provided an opportunity to reorganize and strengthen national health systems. Emergency care was an element of essential care, and should allow for rapid response to incidents, wherever and whenever they took place. Emergency care should be part of an integrated system covering primary prevention and comprehensive emergency services. He re-emphasized integration as the basis of an enduring emergency-care system.

He suggested that the word “prehospital” in paragraph 2(3) should be replaced by “and integrated”. There seemed to be some discrepancy between the concept of emergency care in paragraph 4 of the report and the draft resolution, the former implying that trauma care was part of emergency care, while the draft resolution regularly referred to “trauma and emergency care”, giving the impression that the two were separate. The terminology should include trauma care within emergency care. He stressed the need for data collection systems for monitoring and evaluating emergency-care services.

Mr YOHANNES (Eritrea) said that Eritrea had strengthened its emergency-care system. With donor support and in collaboration with WHO’s country office, a management structure had been introduced at district level. At the national level, integrated supervision and monitoring and evaluation systems had been established. The strengthening of the referral system would be followed by enhanced emergency-care systems in 2007.

Health systems were only as strong as their weakest link. Emergency care was the biggest challenge in delivering health-care services. Developing robust emergency-care systems should begin with sectoral situation analyses and continue by building human resources, improving infrastructure and providing necessary equipment and supplies.

He supported the draft resolution.

Dr METAI (Kiribati) said that his country had been improving its emergency-care system but was hampered by financial limitations. Western medicine, traditional medicine and community participation had been integrated within the system, but depended on voluntary participation.

Legislation governing speed limits and blood-alcohol concentrations was in force and had more than halved the number of road crashes, while voluntary community policing had reduced the number of injuries caused by violence in the home and in the community. People disabled by traffic injuries could receive physical and psychological assistance from practitioners of Western medicine and traditional healers. However, improvements were still needed in the areas of planning, training, emergency facilities, rehabilitation centres and developing legislation, all of which would require support from WHO and development partners.

He supported the draft resolution with the amendments so far proposed.

Mrs DIOUF (Senegal) said that emergencies posed a real problem to public health. In many African countries, as well as injuries resulting from road traffic crashes, there were many obstetric and other emergencies, which combined to give a very high mortality rate.

In Senegal, emergencies had always been dealt with by the public authorities, particularly the Ministry of Health. Emergency transport was often by private means, which risked aggravating injuries, or by the national fire service, using ambulances that were not medically equipped. Emergency facilities existed in hospitals, but lacked qualified staff, maintenance, and reliable supplies. In an effort to improve the situation, Senegal had established, within the public health system, an emergency medical assistance service. It was also involved in health education, research and training, and the implementation of emergency plans.

Based on the concept of emergency care set out in the report, the Secretariat should support countries in situation analyses, mobilizing resources, and strengthening emergency-care services. She supported the draft resolution.

Ms YUAN (United States of America) said that primary prevention played a significant part in reducing the burden of injury and violence, but the strengthening of trauma and emergency care was crucial. Developing emergency-care systems, however, was complex and Member States must assess their own needs, set priorities and develop systems appropriate for their own national situation. The Secretariat could play an important role in that process. To the extent possible, the components of emergency-care and trauma-care systems should be developed simultaneously. Prehospital care, including ambulance services, could be strengthened by training community paramedics and first-aid workers.

Dr FEDOROV (Russian Federation), stressing the high social and economic burden caused by injuries, said that both prevention and proper treatment were essential. Improved emergency care would alleviate the effects of injuries, and required an approach encompassing minor treatment, hospital care and various types of rehabilitation. The principles for improving emergency-care systems had been included in WHO initiatives over the past three or four years and had already proven their effectiveness in several low-income and middle-income countries.

In the Russian Federation, where injuries, particularly from road-traffic crashes, were a leading cause of death, emergency medical transport services and specialized in situ health centres were being strengthened. Although measures to improve emergency care were complex, he supported the draft resolution, which would assist Member States to strengthen their emergency-care systems with low-cost technology and effective planning and organization.

Dr SOLOFONIRINA (Madagascar) echoed previous speakers' comments on the importance of strengthening emergency-care systems. Urgent measures were needed, including better primary prevention. Madagascar had transformed medical facilities close to major road transport routes into surgical centres in order to allow for better referral and treatment of road traffic accident victims. She supported the draft resolution.

Ms NGAUNJE (Malawi) welcomed WHO's efforts to strengthen trauma and emergency-care systems. She supported the draft resolution. Trauma and injuries were a leading cause of death in Africa. Hospitals and other institutions providing emergency care were hampered by inadequate emergency-care equipment, transport, means of communication, technical know-how and life-saving skills. The situation was exacerbated by poor socioeconomic conditions. Although Africa was prone to natural disasters, there was insufficient preparedness for mass-casualty incidents. Most African economies were based on agriculture; pesticide poisoning was common and increasing. The issues surrounding HIV/AIDS discouraged many from donating blood, and its availability for blood transfusions for the victims of road-traffic and other injuries was therefore limited.

Her country's policy for emergency-care systems was limited to certain emergency-care interventions, such as for road-traffic injuries, basic obstetric care emergencies and cholera. Communication through wireless was provided in health centres in remote communities, and families were given guidance on how to access transport in health emergencies. She urged the Secretariat to assist Member States by providing the expertise and resources that would enable them to establish prehospital trauma and emergency-care systems and training.

Dr LEAFASIA (Solomon Islands) supported the draft resolution. The health facilities in the Solomon Islands provided both clinical and emergency care. Emergency health services were hampered by insufficient resources, a shortage of skilled workers and the vast distances that isolated most of the Islands' populations. The lack of reliable transport and communications contributed to the inability to respond to all forms of emergencies, whether man-made or natural. Changing lifestyles were leading to health problems, such as HIV/AIDS and trauma resulting from road-traffic crashes,

overloading a fragile and poorly equipped health system. In recent years, a civil uprising and a tsunami had resulted in many deaths and casualties; assistance from neighbouring countries and other development partners had enabled his country to deal with those emergencies effectively.

In order to strengthen primary health-care systems, his Government was establishing a network of community health centres, whose activities would include preparedness planning and mitigation of emergencies, and improving hospital facilities at the district and regional levels. He requested WHO to provide funding for the implementation of that strategy and the draft resolution.

Professor BOUPHA (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that her country was strengthening the management of both its formal and informal health-care systems in order to achieve the health-related Millenium Development Goals by the year 2015. She supported the draft resolution.

Dr KAZIHISE (Burundi) said that in the area of maternal and child care, access to which was partly free, Burundi had set up ambulance and referral systems in various regions, and had saved numerous lives. The ambulance service would be extended to include all people who needed emergency care as a result of road-crash and other injuries. The provision of emergency care to all would require substantial resources, for setting up facilities and for training the personnel.

He supported the draft resolution.

Dr LE GALÈS-CAMUS (Assistant Director-General), in reply to the delegate of Bangladesh, observed that, although the preambular part of the draft resolution referred to two resolutions adopted by the Health Assembly that dealt with violence and road-traffic injuries, respectively, the scope of the report and the draft resolution under discussion included all traumas. In reply to the concern of the delegate of Morocco, she suggested that "systèmes de soins traumatologiques d'urgence" might make the link more clear between emergency care and trauma.

She thanked the experts who had helped the Secretariat in its work on emergency-care systems.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) read out the proposed amendments. In paragraph 2(4), the delegate of Ecuador had proposed inserting "to improve knowledge of the problem and" after "monitoring mechanism exists" and, in paragraph 2(10) replacing "methods" with "aspects". In paragraph 2(3), the delegate of Nigeria had proposed the deletion of "in locations where they would be cost-effective"; in paragraph 3(2), the insertion of "policy and" between "reviewing" and "legislation" and of "and to use such institutional capacity to assist Member States, upon request, to review and update their policies and legislation" at the end of the paragraph; and the addition of a new subparagraph 3(3bis), to read: "to work with Member States to design strategies required for providing optimal, regular non-emergency and emergency care to all who need them and to assist Member States to mobilize adequate resources from donors and development partners to acheive this goal".

Ms YUAN (United States of America) suggested that "as appropriate" should be added after "mobilize adequate resources" in the new subparagraph proposed by the delegate of Nigeria.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's fifth report and adopted as resolution WHA60.22.

Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy:
Item 12.8 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R17, and A60/15) (continued from the ninth meeting, section 2)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a revised text of the draft resolution, which incorporated amendments proposed by the delegations of Greece, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Russian Federation and Thailand and which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy;¹

Recalling resolutions WHA53.17 on prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, **WHA54.18 on transparency in tobacco control process, [Thailand]** WHA56.1 on the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, WHA57.17 on the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, WHA57.16 on health promotion and healthy lifestyles, WHA58.22 on cancer prevention and control, and WHA58.26 on public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol, and the many related regional committee resolutions, including on mental health;

Deeply concerned that in 2005 noncommunicable diseases caused an estimated 35 million deaths (60% of all deaths globally), that 80% of these deaths occurred in low- and middle-income countries, and that about 16 million deaths occurred among people under 70 years of age;

Noting that the mortality due to noncommunicable diseases is expected to rise by a further 17% by 2015, with serious socioeconomic consequences for Member States, communities and families;

Noting the links between noncommunicable diseases, development, the environment, and human security, and their contribution to health inequalities;

Noting that multisectoral responses continue to be limited by lack of awareness of, and appropriate action to reverse, the pandemic of noncommunicable diseases;

Noting that the importance of prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases has been highlighted in the Eleventh General Programme of Work 2006–2015, which includes the target of reducing death rates from noncommunicable diseases by 2% annually during the next 10 years;

Noting the increasing evidence on the cost-effectiveness of several simple interventions for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases;

Noting the importance of motivating, educating and supporting individuals and families to make healthy choices in their daily lives, and the important role played by governments in providing healthy public policy and environments;

Confirming the importance of tackling the major underlying risk factors for noncommunicable diseases in an integrated, comprehensive, multisectoral and step-by-step manner;

Recognizing the heavy social and economic burden of musculoskeletal disorders especially among the work force and elderly people; [Greece]

Bearing in mind that the response to the triple burden of infectious diseases, noncommunicable diseases and injuries faced by many countries, and their severe resource constraints, requires a strong primary health-care system within an integrated health system;

Recognizing that the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is an essential measure for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases;

¹ Document A60/15.

Recognizing that greater efforts are required globally to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles, and to improve the nutritional quality of food and drink products, the way in which they are marketed, and the quality of information and its availability to consumers and their families, in particular children, young people and other population groups in vulnerable circumstances;

Recognizing that more information is required on the socioeconomic and developmental impact of noncommunicable diseases and on the outcome of available interventions;

Aware that Member States spend only a small proportion of their health-care budget on prevention of noncommunicable diseases and on public health, and that even a minor increase in that percentage would yield tremendous health and socioeconomic benefits;

1. URGES Member States:

(1) to strengthen national and local political will to prevent and control noncommunicable diseases as part of a commitment to achieving the target of reducing death rates from noncommunicable diseases by 2% annually for the next 10 years, as contained in the Eleventh General Programme of Work, 2006–2015;¹

(2) to establish ~~or to~~ **and [Philippines]** strengthen a national coordinating mechanism **and local coalitions [Philippines]** for prevention **and control [Philippines]** of noncommunicable diseases where appropriate to national circumstances, with a broad multisectoral mandate including mobilization of political will and financial resources, and involving all relevant stakeholders;

(3) to develop and implement a national multisectoral evidence-based action plan for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases that sets out priorities, a time frame and performance indicators, provides the basis for coordinating the work of all stakeholders, and actively engages civil society, while ensuring avoidance of potential conflict of interest;

(4) to increase, as appropriate, resources for programmes for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases;

(5) to implement and increase support for existing global initiatives and the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control that contribute to achieving the target of reducing death rates from noncommunicable diseases by 2% annually for the next 10 years;

(6) to **strengthen the capacity of health systems for prevention [Greece]** and make prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases an integral part of programmes aimed at strengthening primary health-care systems, and to strengthen primary health care institutions so that they respond to the challenges raised by noncommunicable diseases;

OR (with also the deletion of paragraph 8)

(6) to **make prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases an integral part of primary health-care programmes and to ensure that health institutions are adequately organized in order to meet the serious challenges raised by noncommunicable diseases, thereby implicitly focusing in particular on primary health care; [Japan]**

(7) to strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems, including country-level epidemiological surveillance mechanisms, in order to compile evidence for informing policy decisions;

(8) to ensure that health institutions are adequately organized in order to address the serious challenges raised by noncommunicable diseases, which implies a particular focus on primary health care;

¹ Document A59/25, Appendix 6.

- (9) to emphasize the key role of governmental functions, including regulatory functions, when combating noncommunicable diseases;
- (10) to increase access to **appropriate health care including [Japan] low-price, high-quality [Philippines] medicines** for high-risk populations in low- and middle-income countries;
- (11) **to incorporate into their national health programmes strategies for public health interventions designed to reduce the incidence of obesity in children and adults, together with measures to prevent and control diabetes mellitus; [Mexico]**

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) on the basis of an outline contained in the report on prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy,¹ to prepare an action plan to be submitted to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board, that sets out priorities, actions, a time frame and performance indicators for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases between 2008 and 2013 at global and regional levels, and to provide support where needed for elaboration, intensified implementation and monitoring of national plans for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, including the further development of an intervention to manage the conditions of people at high risk of such diseases;
- (2) to raise further awareness among Member States of the importance of drawing up, promoting and funding supportive national multisectoral coordination and surveillance mechanisms, **health promotion programmes [Poland]** and plans for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases;
- (3) to provide support to Member States, on request, and to foster partnership, collaboration, cooperation and sharing of best practices among Member States for incorporating comprehensive noncommunicable disease interventions into national policies and programmes, including health systems policies and programmes, and for expanding interventions, including strategies to educate and support individuals and families;
- (4) to disseminate to Member States, in a timely and consistent manner, information on cost-effective, core interventions aimed at preventing and controlling noncommunicable diseases;
- (5) to encourage dialogue with international, regional and national nongovernmental organizations, donors and technical-agency partners and the private sector, while ensuring the avoidance of potential conflict of interest, in order to increase support, resources and partnerships for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, including health and wellness programmes at the workplace as appropriate;
- (6) to promote initiatives aimed at implementing the global strategy ~~in order to with the purpose of increase increasing availability of [Japan] healthy foods food, [Japan] and encouraging promoting healthy diets and healthy eating habits, [Japan]~~ and to promote responsible marketing **including the development of a set of recommendations on marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children, [Norway]** in order to reduce the impact of foods high in saturated fats, *trans*-fatty acids, free sugars, or salt, in dialogue with all relevant stakeholders, including private-sector parties, while ensuring avoidance of potential conflict of interest;
- (7) to build and sustain contact with the mass media in order to ensure continued prominence in the media of issues related to the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases;

¹ Document A60/15.

(8) to improve understanding of the socioeconomic impact of noncommunicable diseases at national and household levels, especially in low- and middle-income countries;

(9) to ensure that the work on prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases is given suitably high priority and support where appropriate;

(10) to develop mechanisms for Member States to coordinate activities on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, in particular to recognize global and regional networking programmes on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases as an effective means of cooperation and implementing the global strategy, and to provide funding and support for the organization and coordination of these programmes at global and regional levels; [Russian Federation]

(11) to strongly promote dialogue between Member States with a view to implementation of concrete actions to prevent obesity and diabetes mellitus within the framework of resolution WHA53.17 on prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health; [Mexico]

(12) to report to the Sixty-third World Health Assembly, and subsequently every two years to the Health Assembly, through the Executive Board, on progress in implementing the global strategy on prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, including progress on the action plan.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) suggested merging the amendments proposed by the delegates of Greece and Japan to paragraph 1(6), so that it would begin with the wording suggested by Greece and continue with that suggested by Japan; that option would involve the deletion of paragraph 1(8).

Ms YUAN (United States of America) endorsed that suggestion. She proposed that the words “low-price” should be deleted in paragraph 1(10) since the most important factor was the provision of high-quality medicines rather than their cost.

Dr OLIVEROS (Philippines) said that it was important to retain the qualifying term, “low-price”, because for low-income countries high-quality medicines at low prices were essential.

Ms YUAN (United States of America) suggested the alternative word “affordable”, but was prepared to discuss appropriate wording with the delegate of the Philippines if that suggestion was not acceptable.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) said that, if the proposal by the delegate of the United States of America were accepted, the beginning of paragraph 1(10) would read: “to increase access to appropriate health care including affordable, high-quality medicines”.

Dr OLIVEROS (Philippines) agreed with the proposal.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Health promotion in a globalized world: Item 12.11 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R14, and A60/18) (continued from the tenth meeting, section 2)

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s fifth report and adopted as resolution WHA60.23.

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a revised text of the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R14, which incorporated amendments proposed by the delegates of Cuba, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Kenya, Kuwait, Mexico, Sweden, Thailand and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolutions WHA42.44 on health promotion, public information and education for health, WHA51.12 on health promotion, WHA57.16 on health promotion and healthy lifestyles, and the outcomes of the six international conferences on health promotion (Ottawa, 1986; Adelaide, Australia, 1988; Sundsvall, Sweden, 1991; Jakarta, 1997; Mexico City, 2000; Bangkok, 2005);

Having considered the report on follow-up to the 6th Global Conference on Health Promotion (Bangkok in 2005),¹ which confirms the need to focus on health promotion actions to address the determinants of health;

Drawing on the Declaration of Alma-Ata, the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, and the Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World which sets out strategic directions for equitable health improvement in the first decades of the twenty-first century;

Considering the actions and recommendations set out in the Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World to make the promotion of health central to the global development agenda, a core responsibility for all governments and a key focus of communities, civil society, and the private sector;

Noting that health promotion is essential for meeting the targets of the internationally agreed health-related development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, is intimately related to the work of WHO's Commission on Social Determinants of Health, and makes an important contribution to realizing the objectives of the Eleventh General Programme of Work;

Recognizing that the dramatic changes of the global burden of disease, **notably due to noncommunicable diseases, [Sweden]** require greater attention, and call for adjustments in society at large and in resource allocation in order to tackle the immediate and underlying determinants of health;

Recognizing that health promotion contributes to the achievement of health for all; [Greece]

Confirming the importance of addressing also the wider determinants of health, and of implementing recommendations on, and undertaking action for, health for all,

1. URGES all Member States:

- (1) to increase, as appropriate, investments in, and to frame sound policies for, health promotion as an essential component of equitable social and economic development;
- (2) to establish, as appropriate, effective mechanisms for a multisectoral, **including interministerial, [Germany]** approach in order to address effectively the social, economic, political and environmental determinants of health throughout the life-course;
- (3) to support and foster the active engagement in health promotion of communities, civil society, **especially people or groups making positive contributions, [Kuwait]** the public ~~including and private sectors and nongovernmental organizations, including associations of public health,~~ **[Venezuela] professional and labour unions, businesses and associations, bodies, especially those involved in public health and health promotion, [Venezuela]** while avoiding any possible conflict of interest **and promoting constructive engagement for mutual benefit; [Thailand]**

¹ Document A60/18.

(4) systematically to monitor, evaluate **and improve** [Kuwait] health-promotion policies, programmes, infrastructure and investment, on a regular basis, including consideration of the use of health-impact assessments, **to report results in solving problems related to health promotion and to publicize and use those results in the planning process**; [Thailand]

(4bis) **to reorient national public health systems towards the promotion and adoption of healthier lifestyles by individuals, families and communities**; [Ghana]

(5) ~~to close the gap between~~ **to introduce into** current practices ~~and those functions based on the evidence of effective, health promotion by the full use of evidence-based health promotion interventions~~; [Cuba]

(6) **that have successfully implemented a national public health policy, within which health promotion is the key to modifying the determinants of health, effectively to transfer their expertise to those countries that are still in the implementation phase**; [Mexico]

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to strengthen the capacity for health promotion across the Organization in order to provide better support to Member States by advancing knowledge and the active engagement of other appropriate organizations of the United Nations system and international organizations;

(2) to provide support to Member States in their continuous efforts to strengthen national health systems with a special focus on the primary health sector, in order to enhance the ability to tackle serious threats to health, ~~including those caused by noncommunicable diseases~~; [Cuba]

(3) to optimize use of existing forums of Member States for multisectoral, **including interministerial** stakeholders, interested organizations and other bodies, while avoiding any possible conflict of interest, in order to support the development and implementation of health promotion; [Germany]

(4) to encourage the convening of national, subregional, regional and global **multisectoral** conferences on health promotion on a regular basis; [Cuba]

(5) to monitor and evaluate progress, to identify major shortcomings in health promotion globally, and to report on a regular basis **and make the reports accessible to the public**; [Thailand]

(6) to facilitate exchange of information with international nonhealth forums on key aspects of health promotion;

(6bis) **to advocate political and socioeconomic policies that impact positively on health**; [Kenya]

(7) to report to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board, on progress in implementing this resolution.

Ms YUAN (United States of America) said that the Director-General should be requested to advocate all policies that impacted positively on health. She therefore proposed that in the new paragraph 2(6bis) proposed by Kenya, the words “political and socioeconomic” should be deleted.

Dr OKEYO (Kenya) agreed with that proposal.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s fifth report and adopted as resolution WHA60.24.

Integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO: draft strategy: Item 12.12 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R6, and A60/19) (continued from the eleventh meeting)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a revised text of the draft resolution contained in EB120.R6, which incorporated amendments proposed by the delegations of Botswana, Chile, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, Sweden, Switzerland and Thailand and which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the draft strategy for ~~incorporating a~~ **integrating** gender ~~perspective analysis and actions~~ into the ~~mainstream work~~ of WHO's policies and programmes;¹

Recalling the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing, 1995), the recommendations of Beijing plus 10 Conference (2005) and their reports, the Economic and Social Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2, the United Nations Millennium Declaration 2000, the 2005 World Summit Outcome² and resolution WHA58.30 on accelerating achievement of the internationally agreed health-related development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,

1. NOTES WITH APPRECIATION the strategy for ~~incorporating a~~ **integrating** gender ~~perspective analysis and actions~~ into the ~~mainstream work~~ of WHO's work;
2. URGES Member States:
 - (1) to include gender analysis and planning in joint strategic, ~~and~~ operational **and budget [Switzerland]** planning, including country cooperation strategies;
 - (2) to formulate national strategies for addressing gender issues in health policies, programmes and research, including in the area of reproductive and sexual health;
 - (3) to lay emphasis on training and sensitization on, and promotion of, gender, women and health;
 - (4) to ensure that a gender-equality perspective ~~gender-friendly health care~~ [Sweden] is incorporated in all levels of health-care delivery and services, [Sweden and Switzerland] ~~delivery~~, including those for adolescents and youth; [Jamaica]
 - (5) to collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data, **conduct research on the underlying factors of gender inequality [Thailand]** and use the results to inform policies and programmes;
 - (6) to make progress towards gender equality in the health sector, in order to ensure that the contribution of women, men, girls and boys ~~to~~ **as providers of [Sweden]** health care is considered in health policy and planning **and training for the health workforce; [Jamaica]**
3. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to assess and address gender differences and inequalities in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of WHO's work, and to include this requirement in post descriptions and criterion in performance evaluation;
 - (2) to define indicators and to monitor, and assure accountability for, implementation of the strategy by the Secretariat at headquarters and in regional and country offices;

¹ Document A60/19.

² United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/1.

- (3) to support and sustain incorporation of a gender perspective into the mainstream of WHO's policies and programmes, including through recruiting staff **as soon as possible [Botswana]** with specific responsibility and experience on gender and women's health;
- (4) to provide support to Member States **to build their capacity for gender analysis and action, and [Kenya and India]** for formulating and sustaining strategies and action plans **(and relevant budgets) [Switzerland]** for integrating gender equality in all health policies, programmes, and research;
- (5) to give priority to the use of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis in WHO's publications, **including relevant documents submitted to the Executive Board and the Health Assembly, [Sweden]** and in efforts to strengthen health-information systems, in order to ensure that they reflect awareness of gender equality as a determinant of health;
- (6) to ensure that programmatic and thematic evaluations indicate the extent to which gender issues have been incorporated in the Organization's work;
- (7) **to identify, and divulgate information about, good practices on measuring the impact of integrating gender into health policies, including the development of indicators and health-information systems that disaggregate data by sex; [Chile]**
- (7 8) to ensure full implementation of the strategy, and to report every two years on progress to the Health Assembly, through the Executive Board.

Ms YUAN (United States of America) proposed the insertion of "as appropriate" in paragraph 2(1) between "strategic, operational and" and "budget planning". In paragraph 2(5), in order to promote research into all the factors that influenced gender disparities, she proposed replacing "on the underlying factors of gender inequality" by "on the factors of gender disparities".

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) suggested that it might be better to insert "as appropriate" after "budget planning".

Dr SOPIDA CHAVANICHKUL (Thailand) agreed with the amendment proposed to paragraph 2(5).

Mr MARTIN (Switzerland) said that he had understood the words "as appropriate" in paragraph 2(1) to refer only to budget planning. The text must make it clear that they did not refer to strategic and operational planning as well.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) suggested the following wording to resolve the problem: "strategic and operational planning, and budget planning as appropriate,".

Mr KAZIHISE (Burundi) said that in the French version, the words "health workforce" in paragraph 2(6) would be better rendered in French by "personnel sanitaire" than by "main d'oeuvre sanitaire".

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Workers' health: draft global plan of action: Item 12.13 of the Agenda (Documents A60/20 and A60/20/Add.1) (continued from the eleventh meeting)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a revised text of the draft resolution on workers' health: draft global plan of action, which incorporated amendments proposed by the delegations of Cameroon, Costa Rica, Germany, Greece, Kenya, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russian Federation,

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's fifth report and adopted as resolution WHA60.25.

Switzerland, Thailand, United States of America and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the draft global plan of action on workers' health;¹

Recalling resolution WHA49.12 which endorsed the global strategy for occupational health for all;

Recalling and recognizing the recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002) on strengthening WHO action on occupational health and linking it to public health;²

Recalling the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006, and the other international instruments in the area of occupational safety and health adopted by the General Conference of the ILO;³

Considering that the health of workers is determined not only by occupational hazards, but also by social and individual factors, and access to health services;

Mindful that interventions exist for primary prevention of occupational hazards and for developing healthy workplaces;

Concerned that there are major gaps between and within countries in the exposure of workers **and local communities [Papua New Guinea]** to occupational hazards and in their access to occupational health services;

Stressing that the health of workers is an essential prerequisite for productivity and economic development,

1. **ENDORSES [OR] WELCOMES** the global plan of action on workers' health 2008–2017;
2. URGES Member States:
 - (1) to devise, in collaboration with workers, employers and their organizations, national policies and plans for implementation of the global plan of action on workers' **and the local communities, [Papua New Guinea]** health as appropriate, and to establish appropriate mechanisms **and legal frameworks [Kenya]** for their ~~execution~~ **implementation [Greece]**, monitoring and evaluation;
 - (2) to work towards full coverage of all workers, including those in the informal economy, small- and medium-sized enterprises, agriculture, and migrant ~~workers~~ **and contractual workers, [Oman]** with essential interventions and basic occupational health services for primary prevention of occupational and work-related diseases and injuries;
 - (3) to take measures to establish and strengthen core institutional capacities and human resource capabilities for dealing with the special health needs of working populations;
 - (3bis) to generate evidence on workers' health and translate that evidence into policy and actions [Thailand];**
 - (4) to develop and make available specific guidelines for the establishment of appropriate health services and monitoring tools for human and environmental hazards and diseases introduced into local communities where commercial activities have been set up to meet the associated needs of those communities [Papua New Guinea];**
 - (4) to ensure collaboration and concerted action by all national health programmes relevant to workers' health, such as those dealing with prevention of occupational

¹ As contained in document A60/20, Annex.

² Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Document A/Conf.199/20, Annex.

³ International Labour Conference, Ninety-fifth Session, Geneva 2006. Provisional Record 20A.

diseases and injuries, communicable and chronic diseases, health promotion, mental health, environmental health, and health systems development;

(5) to encourage incorporation of workers, **and the local communities, [Papua New Guinea]** health in national and sectoral policies for sustainable development, poverty reduction, employment, trade, environmental protection, and education;

(6) to formulate national and intercountry strategic approaches to providing medical care and services for sick and injured migrant workers [Philippines];

(6) to encourage the development of effective mechanisms for collaboration and cooperation between developed and developing countries at regional, subregional and country levels in implementing the global plan of action on workers' health;

(7) to encourage development of comprehensive health and nonhealth strategies to ensure reintegration of sick and injured workers into the mainstream of the society, in coordination with the different government and in nongovernmental organizations [Philippines];

3. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to promote implementation of the global plan of action on workers' health 2008–2017 at national and international levels **with a definite timeline and indicators for the establishment of occupational health services at the global level [Thailand];**

(2) to strengthen collaboration with ILO, **the International Organization for Migration and other related international organizations [Philippines]** and to stimulate joint regional and country efforts on workers' health;

(3) to maintain and strengthen the network of WHO collaborating centres for occupational health as an important mechanism for implementation of the global plan of action;

(4) to support capacity building for coordination within and between countries and for management of information concerning the health of migrant workers [Philippines];

(4) to report to the Health Assembly through the Executive Board at its 132nd (2013) and its 142nd (2018) sessions on progress made in the implementation of the global plan of action.

The revised paragraphs from the draft global plan of action were as follows:

10. WHO will work with Member States to strengthen the capacities of the ministries of health to provide leadership for activities related to workers' health, to formulate and implement policies and action plans, and to stimulate intersectoral collaboration. Its activities will include global campaigns for elimination of asbestos-related diseases **in line with international legal instruments and the latest evidence for effective interventions** and immunization of health-care workers against hepatitis B, and other actions addressing priority work-related health outcomes. **In implementing the global campaign for elimination of asbestos and related diseases, allowance should be made for a differentiated approach to regulating the various forms of asbestos, as laid down in the Rotterdam Convention, on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade (1998).**

...

14. Health promotion and prevention of noncommunicable diseases should be further stimulated in the workplace, in particular by advocating healthy diet and physical activity among workers, and promoting mental health, **maternal, child and newborn health** at work. Global health threats, such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, **and** malaria and avian influenza, can also be prevented and controlled at the workplace.

...

18. Development of human resources for workers' health should be further strengthened by: further postgraduate training in relevant disciplines; building capacity for basic occupational health services; incorporating workers' health in the training of primary health care practitioners and other professionals needed for occupational health services; creating incentives for attracting and retaining human resources for workers' health, and encouraging the establishment of networks of services and professional associations. **Attention should be given not only to postgraduate but also to basic training for health professionals in various fields such as a promotion of workers' health and the prevention and treatment of workers' health problems. This should be a particular priority in primary health care.**

...

30. WHO, supported by its network of Collaborating Centres for Occupational Health and in partnership with other intergovernmental and international organizations, will work with the Member States to implement this plan of action by:

- ~~▪ providing leadership to international efforts on workers' health, engaging in partnership and joint action where necessary with ILO and other organizations of the United Nations system, organizations of employers, trade unions and other stakeholders in civil society and the private sector;~~
- **promoting and engaging in partnership and joint action with ILO and other organizations of the United Nations system, organizations of employers, trade unions and other stakeholders in civil society and the private sector in order to strengthen international efforts on workers' health;**
- **in coherence with the actions undertaken by ILO,** setting standards for protection of workers' health, providing guidelines, promoting and monitoring their use, and contributing to the adoption and implementation of international labour conventions;
- articulating policy options for framing national agendas for workers' health based on best practices and evidence;
- providing technical support for tackling the specific health needs of working populations and building core institutional capacities for action on workers' health;
- monitoring and addressing trends in workers' health;
- establishing appropriate scientific and advisory mechanisms to facilitate action on workers' health at global and regional levels.

Professor PEREIRA MIGUEL (Portugal) said that, because the Executive Board would be discussing health and migration at its 122nd session, and having consulted the delegates of Papua New Guinea and Philippines, consideration of new paragraphs 2(6) and 3(4) might be deferred to that session. He proposed deleting "local communities" in paragraph 2(1); replacing "contractual workers" by "subcontracting" in paragraph 2(2), and merging paragraphs 2(3bis) and 2(3). He further proposed, in new paragraph 2(4), replacing the wording as far as "activities" by "to establish appropriate health services and tools for prevention of occupational and environmental hazards and diseases in local communities where industrial and agricultural"; in paragraph 2(5), deleting "and the local communities", at the end of original paragraph 2(6); deleting new paragraph 2(6) and inserting "including the health needs of migrant workers" and, in paragraph 3(2), deleting "the International

Organization for Migration”. In the annex containing the draft global plan of action, the third sentence of paragraph 10, referring to the Rotterdam Convention, should be deleted since it was covered by the second sentence and there were, besides, other international agreements that referred to asbestos, such as the Basel Convention and the ILO Convention.

Ms YUAN (United States of America) proposed that in paragraph 2(4), “monitoring tools” should be replaced by “surveillance mechanisms”.

Dr SOPIDA CHAVANICHKUL (Thailand), referring to paragraph 14 of the annex, said that her delegation had proposed a reference to reproductive health, not just maternal, child and newborn health. Reproductive health was the main cause of sick leave and absenteeism among health workers and was closely linked to maternity leave and to the prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. She wanted her concerns to be reflected in a revised version of the draft global action plan.

Dr Ali Jaffer SULEIMAN (Oman) said that his delegation had requested the reference to “contractual workers” in paragraph 2(2). In the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, contracting differed considerably from subcontracting and the resolution must distinguish between them. Contractual workers worked on individual contracts of at least a year’s duration, whereas that was not the case with subcontracting. He also requested that the other Council countries should be listed as sponsors namely, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Dr BIN SHAKAR (United Arab Emirates) confirmed that contractual workers were employed under individual contracts, whereas subcontracting took place at the company level. Contractual workers were migrant workers rather than immigrants.

Dr AL-SALEH (Kuwait) said that, since subcontracting was different from contracting, changing the wording of paragraph 2(2) could result in contractual workers losing their rights.

Ms KAZRAGIENE (Lithuania) said that Lithuania wished to sponsor the resolution.

Dr LEVENTHAL (Israel) noted that the original text of paragraph 2(2) said “migrant and contractual workers”. Since the difference between contractual and subcontracted workers was that the former were documented and the latter might be undocumented, in the interests of clarity, “documented” might be added before “migrant”.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) asked whether the sponsors who had drafted the references to migration agreed with the proposal to delete new paragraphs 2(6) and 3(4) since their subject matter would be taken up by the Executive Board at its 122nd session.

Dr OLIVEROS (Philippines) agreed to the deferral of consideration of the matters in those paragraphs, as the discussion of health and migration at the next session of the Executive Board should meet her concerns.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) summarized the amendments proposed to the revised draft resolution. In paragraph 2(1), “and the local communities” would be deleted; in paragraph 2(2), “contractual workers” would be retained; and paragraphs 2(3) and 2(3bis) would be merged. With regard to the amendment proposed to new paragraph 2(4), it might be preferable to retain most of the original wording while maintaining the focus of the amendment, which involved replacing “commercial activities” by “mining and other industrial and agricultural activities”. It had also been proposed to replace the words “monitoring tools” with “surveillance mechanisms”. In the annex containing the draft global plan of action, the third sentence of paragraph 10 should be deleted

since the new wording in the second sentence was sufficient to cover it. In paragraph 14, the words “and reproductive health” should be inserted after “newborn health”.

Dr SOPIDA CHAVANICHKUL (Thailand) said that, in a spirit of compromise, she agreed to “family health” rather than “reproductive health”.

Dr SHEVYREVA (Russian Federation) insisted on retention of the third sentence of paragraph 10 in the annex. Her Government was working actively on the ratification of the Rotterdam Convention and the adoption of provisions that contradicted the Convention would be inappropriate. Her amendment simply proposed a differentiated approach to regulating asbestos and did not conflict with other countries’ interests.

Professor PEREIRA MIGUEL (Portugal) said that he had proposed the change in paragraph 10 after consulting experts. Could the Russian amendment be incorporated in the preceding sentence?

Mrs WEBER-MOSDORF (Assistant Director-General) said that the reference in the second sentence to “international legal instruments” was broader; the third sentence would be repetitive and make the paragraph less clear. She asked whether the delegate of the Russian Federation could propose a revised formulation for the second sentence.

Dr SHEVYREVA (Russian Federation) said that it was important to reflect the need for a differentiated approach to regulating the various forms of asbestos.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) suggested that the words “bearing in mind a differentiated approach to regulating the various forms of asbestos” could be inserted before the new text in the second sentence.

Mrs WEBER-MOSDORF (Assistant Director-General) said that that wording was still too specific for a global plan aimed at tackling all the risks caused by hazardous chemicals. She would prefer to retain a broader formulation, but the decision rested with the Member States.

Dr SHEVYREVA (Russian Federation) said that there was no need to mention asbestos again. The wording could be: “bearing in mind a differentiated approach to regulating its various forms”.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) said that there appeared to be a slight majority in favour of the use of “endorses” in preference to “welcomes” in paragraph 1 of the draft resolution.

Ms YUAN (United States of America) said that she could accept the term “endorses”.

Ms BELLO DE KEMPER (Dominican Republic), referring to paragraph 10 of the annexed draft global plan of action and, having understood that the reference to the Rotterdam Convention would be removed, suggested that it be replaced by the phrase “relevant international legal instruments”.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s fifth report and adopted as resolution WHA60.26.

Strengthening of health information systems: Item 12.15 of the Agenda (Documents EBSS–EB118/2006/REC/1, resolution EB118.R4, and A60/22)

Mr ROSALES (Argentina) shared the views in the report regarding strengthening health information systems. Argentina's health statistics system had been updated in line with health policies, international regulations and user demand. The updated health statistics had helped in devising more precise indicators in order to assess both federal health plans and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Progress had been made in health monitoring and surveillance systems and in transplant databases. He supported the adoption of a technical framework as the global standard for producing, reproducing and using health information.

Dr AYDINLI (Turkey), in considering options for standardized terminology, recalled that even developed countries had incompatible terminology systems. He appreciated WHO's efforts to collaborate with international organizations and to represent the interests of Member States, particularly in developing countries. Collaboration between Member States was crucial in standardizing terminology. WHO should participate more in the management boards of international standardization organizations. Harmonization efforts, mapping studies and agreeing rules in a spirit of consensus would assist countries in successfully adopting terminologies whatever their infrastructure capacity. The Secretariat should also help Member States to introduce the necessary structures for managing and sustaining e-health services and applications.

Mr DANKOKO (Senegal) said that his Government's Ministry of Health continued to strengthen its health information system with the involvement of all stakeholders. A national health information service established in 2004 aimed to improve statistics management, communication and the consistency of health data. However, an integrated system able to take into account international data had yet to be set up. Centralized systems lacked institutional support, and functional and communication links, with the result that collection, dissemination and processing of data were dysfunctional. There were many information subsystems in various departments, with no master plan for development of health information. Qualified staff were lacking. At the decentralized level, data collected were often incomplete and of insufficient quality and staff lacked the necessary information, motivation or training to complete the forms.

Data management tools and systems were being evaluated in order to improve recording and dissemination of data. A spreadsheet for data collection had been designed and distributed. A strategy to upgrade training in software applications and data management had been implemented for the past year. Senegal was committed to improving its health information system and supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB118.R4.

Dr ADDAI (Ghana) said that health information systems were vital for functioning and sustainable health systems, equitable allocation, efficient use of resources and accountability. Yet they were weak in the poorer settings where they were most needed. Efforts to strengthen them were often fragmented and led by disease control programmes. Ghana had begun to work with the Health Metrics Network, strengthening key areas in which it was difficult to attract donor support. Ghana was investing in information and communication technology that would facilitate the dissemination of information. However, such efforts to harmonize and strengthen national health systems were challenged by information needs, and investments in health information systems were sometimes directed by vertically-funded and donor-led disease control programmes, including some of WHO's activities. He asked whether there was consensus within the Secretariat on using the technical framework proposed by the Health Metrics Network. Building consensus on information systems within the Secretariat would ensure that harmonized support was given to Member States. He proposed that subparagraph 3.2 of the draft resolution should be amended by inserting the word "harmonized" before "support to Member States".

Dr METAI (Kiribati) acknowledged the extensive help provided by WHO to improve his country's health information systems in the past 15 years: computers had been installed and staff had been trained in standardized reporting, analysis and dissemination of data. Yet data reporting from clinics was still poor; timely communication, although vital, was hampered by the large area over which the Kiribati islands were scattered. He requested further technological support to improve reporting from isolated islands and clinics; the technology should be user-friendly and easy to maintain, and powered by local sources of energy. He supported the draft resolution with the addition in the fourth preambular paragraph of the words "have scattered, isolated and hard-to-reach primary sources of information" before "understaffed and inadequately resourced". Solving communication problems should be part of the strengthening of health information systems, a need Kiribati shared with other developing countries.

Dr CHAKIROU (Congo), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of WHO's African Region, said that producing indicators posed complex technical problems and required specific competence in public health, biomedicine and statistics. The reliability and validity of health statistics in African countries varied enormously, as did the accuracy of the measurement tools. Data requests were often linked to donor requirements or to international initiatives, further weakening national health information systems. Information was not often used for decision-making in African countries because it was seldom analysed or disseminated in time. Since health statistics were unreliable, owing to limited resources, they posed a threat to public health, made planning difficult and left decision-makers unable to identify problems and needs or to monitor progress and assess the impact of interventions. Given the need for a high-quality, standardized, health information system, he fully supported the proposal for all to work within the same global framework. Many countries in the African Region had benefited from the Health Metrics Network tool, which adapted well to existing systems. The Region's Member States were committed to meeting the challenges through a standardized national, regional and global framework; strengthening health information systems through development plans; improving processes for producing, analysing, disseminating and using information for decision-making; and establishing monitoring mechanisms. The Network and its partners should support the "pathfinder countries" in completing the exercise, and produce a development plan for health information services. The Region's Member States supported the strategic approach but would need the assistance of the Secretariat. He supported the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 12:30.

THIRTEENTH MEETING

Tuesday, 22 May 2007, at 14:45

Chairman: Professor ENG HUOT (Cambodia)
later: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Strengthening of health information systems: Item 12.15 of the Agenda (Documents EBSS–EB118/2006/REC/1, resolution EB118.R4, and A60/22) (continued)

Ms VIELMA (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) observed that building an accurate and up-to-date health information system was important for the formulation of health policies. Good health information required collaboration between the health and statistics sectors. Venezuela was strengthening its health information system through training of the personnel producing vital statistics and epidemiological bulletins, and through programmes aimed at upgrading research. A draft law on the national health system would create a system for collecting, analysing and evaluating the most recent health data, consolidated in accordance with the requirements of institutions comprising the national health system and organized on the basis of age, sex, social stratum and ethnic group. The draft law provided for a national strategic plan on information and communication technologies, aimed at safeguarding available health information. She supported the draft resolution.

Dr HUWAIL (Iraq) said that an effective health information system required: an elaborated health information system that took into account all epidemiological and demographic variables; intergovernmental coordination and cooperation with the support of WHO; updated technologies; a health information system in all primary health-care programmes; institutional and individual capacity-building on all aspects of the system; maintaining an efficient health system; intersectoral collaboration; and communication at all levels. Information should be shared for creating such a system.

Ms WARANYA TEOKUL (Thailand) said that evidence-based decision-making could help parliaments, civil society and the international development community to minimize the gaps in public health delivery and raise commitment levels. Health information systems could be used for prioritizing programmes, guiding resource allocation, and identify targets; they could also serve as monitoring and evaluation tools. They must be strengthened in order to provide a baseline indicator of health status and of health-care delivery. Limited financial and human resources had been made available for health information systems nationally and internationally. In WHO, for example, only 3.8% of appropriations for the 2008–2009 financial period had been allocated to the strategic objective relating to health systems. She welcomed the contributions from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other partners in WHO's Health Metrics Network for strengthening health information systems. She sought more information on the relationship between that Network and the Health Metrics Institute at the University of Washington. She endorsed the views of the delegate of Ghana regarding the collection of information based on the Network's technical framework. She supported the draft resolution as amended by Ghana.

Dr Jean Louis took the Chair.

Mr MABUZA (Swaziland) said that health information systems were crucial for decision-making. Implementing the Health Metrics Network programme had begun in Swaziland the previous year. Following a comprehensive assessment of the health information system, a health information systems policy would be framed. With the help of the Network, the Ministry of Health was applying a new patient management system in antiretroviral treatment clinics. It was also connecting all health information systems to a national computer network, and linking hospitals, health centres, public health units and antiretroviral sites. A data validation exercise had been conducted. Swaziland's comprehensive Human Resource Information System covered all staff in the health sector and provided analyses of variables including staff levels and vacancy rates. He thanked WHO and other development partners for their continued support.

Mr HU Jianping (China) commended the Secretariat's work on strengthening health information systems in Member States. The report should have given more attention to two difficulties in the sharing and use of the information collected: poor coordination and division of labour in some countries, and even within a health system itself; and differences in the standard of information collected by the various health sectors in a country.

In the draft resolution, he proposed the addition of "and through effective coordination and reasonable division of labour within the health sector" at the end of paragraph 1(1), and a new paragraph 1(6), reading: "to increase human resources and financial input and strengthen health information standards research in order to improve standardization of health information systems".

Mrs EL-HALABI (Botswana) said that many developing countries, including Botswana, had fragmented, understaffed and underfunded health information systems, which hindered progress in monitoring the attainment of national and international goals. Botswana was concerned about the duplication and fragmentation of data and the existence of obsolete data. In order to ensure that the data collected were accurate and relevant, nurses, doctors and other health-care workers at the central and district levels were receiving training on the use of the International Classification of Diseases (10th edition) and of software applications. A new Department of Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation had been entrusted with developing a focal point for the integration, coordination and strengthening of the country's health information systems.

Botswana welcomed the Health Metrics Network and the target set for 2011. The Secretariat should support countries in the preparation of grant proposals; the criteria for providing financial support to countries for implementing the Network should be reviewed in order to confer eligibility on countries like Botswana, which were above the low-income to middle-income bracket yet in need of assistance. The participation of WHO and other development partners was crucial for the strengthening of health information systems, and she supported the draft resolution.

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) said that health information was essential in order to provide basic health care for all and agreed that relevant and good-quality information was necessary to support health action. If health information systems were to be improved, the information generated through research must be taken into account, and activities in health statistics should be increased in each country. Observing that health information went beyond the responsibility of any single government entity, she drew attention to WHO's role (paragraph 6 of the report). In future, when the Health Assembly was invited to consider a resolution recommended in a resolution of the Executive Board, the relevant text should be appended to the Health Assembly document for ease of reference.

Dr LEAFASIA (Solomon Islands) noted the importance of accurate and up-to-date health information for making decisions, including those on WHO's budgetary allocations. Some development partners working in the Solomon Islands cited different statistics, depending on whether they were reporting on progress or requesting more funds for their work, a situation that showed the importance of a good and accurate information system. His Government needed support from WHO to strengthen its health information system and so ensure that decisions on resource allocation and planning reflected actual needs.

Dr MTONGA (Zambia) said that the Health Metrics Network would increase the availability, quality, value and use of timely and accurate health information, enhance coordination, and reduce fragmentation and duplication of efforts. Zambia had continued to develop a strong health information system through its national statistics system. The health management information system was being extensively revised to make it more responsive to reporting needs at all levels of health service delivery and to generate statistics on Zambia's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. It was designed around the framework set out in the Health Metrics Network in order to ascertain quality in reporting and data flow.

The joint annual review in the Zambian health sector had confirmed its contribution to poverty reduction within the fifth national development plan. It also identified opportunities for investment for development partners. Other surveys, such as those on sexual behaviour and on the food, health and nutrition information system, conducted by the Central Statistics Office, were important in identifying needs in the Zambian health sector. Noting the importance of political leadership, he recalled that his President had launched an information, communication and technology policy that would foster environments conducive to investment, thus enhancing health information systems at all levels. He appreciated WHO's continued support and endorsed the draft resolution.

Dr AL GHAFIRI (Oman), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, welcomed the work on strengthening health information systems. The report did not place enough emphasis on WHO's normative role as the only organization capable of setting standards for health information systems. Member States expected the Secretariat to lend its expertise and technical assistance in order to ensure that countries had the capacity to collect data and, more importantly, to transform them into useful knowledge. He was concerned that the report treated improved capacity to produce estimates (paragraph 20) as an end in itself. As far as possible, estimates should be avoided. Sound evidence should be generated by strengthening capacity for routine data collection from health-care facilities.

However, constraints had to be recognized. Many countries in the Region had not developed national information policies or the necessary infrastructure for collecting, storing, managing, disseminating and using information; sustainable funding and serious commitment from governments and donors were lacking. Additional human resources were needed at managerial level, and a culture had to be promoted in which planning was based on evidence; that would require intervention in the early stages of medical and health sciences education. The organizational culture of ministries of health and other health-care institutions also needed to change. Health information systems should also aim to support health systems. Funding agencies should cease promoting information systems for specific health programmes or diseases.

Dr FAKEYE (Nigeria) said that improving health information systems was a core strategy for strengthening health systems. In 1999, Nigeria had introduced a health management information system with specified minimum capacities at the federal, state and local government levels. During 2004–2006, formats and minimum data sets for the various levels had been reviewed. Nigeria was also involved in the Health Metrics Network, and was mapping the availability of services. Data should be collected, analysed and used to inform decision-making at all levels. Those activities, in a country the size of Nigeria, demanded enormous resources. Health information systems for specific programmes could distort national systems. Countries should organize such systems as subsets of their national systems, and to harmonize the procedures followed.

In the draft resolution, he proposed the addition of two new subparagraphs in paragraph 1, the first reading: "to recognize, establish and operationalize health information systems as one of the core strategies for strengthening their national health systems", and the second: "to regard programme-based information systems as subsets of national health information systems and to organize the harmonization of the various programme information subsystems in this context".

Mrs CHERQAOU (Morocco) supported the draft resolution. The target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals was approaching, yet many countries were still without adequate or

any health information systems. To achieve the Goals, priority must be given to strengthening those systems and ensuring their appropriate use. Member States would need support for that purpose. She therefore proposed an additional subparagraph in paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, requesting the Director-General to give priority to country programmes and to increase WHO's support for the strengthening of national health information systems. Only a few countries had so far benefited from the Health Metrics Network, possibly because of a lack of information on how to take part. Paragraph 3 of the draft resolution should therefore be further amended by requesting the Director-General to keep Member States informed about the Network, in order to enable them to cooperate more closely with it.

Dr TSESHKOVSKIY (Russian Federation) said that the standardized collection and analysis of reliable data through a health information system were essential for making decisions about resources and priorities. The functioning of a health information system depended on funding, the setting of standards, staffing, organization, programming and techniques. Data should also be comparable, nationally and internationally.

In the Russian Federation, it was difficult to compare data from different ministries. His country would continue to cooperate with WHO in strengthening its national health information system and in using the Health Metrics Network. That might involve monitoring the introduction of international standards for primary statistical data, especially mortality statistics; the translation into Russian and adaptation of methods of data collection; and technical support for the training of various target groups, ranging from the doctors who supplied the data to the statisticians analysing them for decision-makers. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr SUGIURA (Japan) said that reliable and timely information was needed for monitoring and evaluation, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other health targets, and effective policy-making. He supported the draft resolution. WHO should continue to play a leading role in the area, working with other relevant international organizations and donors.

Ms YUAN (United States of America) supported the use of health information technology to improve the quality and efficacy of health care and provide statistics and epidemiological data. Accurate information was vital in working towards the Millennium Development Goals. It was clear that many developing countries faced difficulties in gathering the necessary data. The United States supported the role played by WHO at headquarters and regional levels in exploring ways of using health information technology to improve the delivery of primary health care, especially in resource-poor settings. WHO should foster and support collaboration among stakeholders in the Health Metrics Network. It must, however, remain the prerogative of Member States to establish national systems and to negotiate and develop international systems. Supporting the draft resolution, she suggested that, since Member States were urged in paragraph 1 to mobilize the necessary scientific, technical, social, political, human and financial resources, the words "to strengthen" in the amendment proposed by the delegate of China should be replaced by "to increase".

Mr BENKACI (Algeria) said that several reports to the Health Assembly had pointed to weaknesses in the health information systems of Member States. The burden of responding to demands from external organizations was distracting country information systems from fulfilling their role in health planning, especially where donor support depended on statistical and other information. Nevertheless, countries should collect, analyse and use data, initially for their own purposes and then to inform others. If treated as a vertical function and part of national health programmes, the gathering of data would permit the formulation of sound policies and their subsequent adjustment as necessary.

Algeria had established a health information system and an epidemiological surveillance system underpinned by telecommunication technology. The national health intranet provided health professionals with access to databases and up-to-date information, enabling them to intervene immediately in the event of disease outbreaks or other crises. However, the financing of the

infrastructure was a burden to the health sector. WHO should assist in standardizing methods of establishing integrated and reliable information systems in Member States.

The report should not have included the reference in paragraph 1 to the attainment of international development goals by public health policy-makers. The last sentence of paragraph 18 should have included a mention of health information system professionals and specialists in the collection and compilation of data, those being the people responsible for preparing information for analysts and decision-makers.

Dr EVANS (Assistant Director-General) assured the delegate of Turkey that WHO would continue to work with organizations that were developing standards for health terminologies. In reply to the comment by the delegate of Kiribati about the need to develop appropriate technology for the reporting of information from locations such as small island States, he said that implementation of the measures set out in resolution WHA58.28 on eHealth would provide affordable and accessible solutions. Discussions on the matter were currently under way at the tenth session of the UNCTAD Commission on Science and Technology for Development. In reply to the delegate of Thailand, he said that the Secretariat would take steps to learn more about the Health Metrics Institute to be funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and its relation to the Health Metrics Network, and would keep Member States informed. In reply to the delegate of Botswana, he said that as a member of the Health Metrics Network board, WHO would draw attention to the concerns of Member States about the criteria for obtaining support from the Network. In response to the delegate of Oman, he said that WHO's normative role had not been supplanted by the Health Metrics Network; in fact, the Network was looking to WHO to extend its role so as to bring in other partners. In reply to the additional comment by the delegate of Oman, he said that all the instruments used for conducting surveys and aggregating data on the basis of clinical records carried a degree of bias, and that the process of correcting for bias involved estimation. It was therefore important to strengthen capacity in order to produce the best possible estimates. However, better data would also improve the estimates. In reply to the delegate of Morocco, he said that the progress of the Health Metrics Network had been discussed in Committee B, and that WHO would continue to report on the Network's activities; so far 65 Member States were involved. The Network's web site provided further information.

The meeting was suspended from 15:40 to 16:50.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) read out the proposed amendments. The delegate of Kiribati had proposed the insertion, in the fourth preambular paragraph, after "fragmented", of the words "and have on occasions scattered, isolated and hard-to-reach primary sources of information, and are ...". The delegate of Nigeria had proposed a new subparagraph 1(1), to read: "to recognize, establish and operationalize health information systems as one of the core strategies for strengthening their national health systems". The delegate of China had suggested adding to paragraph 1(1) the words: "and through effective coordination within health departments as well as a rational division of responsibilities". The delegate of Nigeria had suggested the addition of a new paragraph 1(1), to read: "to regard programme-based information systems as subsets of national health information systems and to organize the harmonization of the various programme information subsystems in this context". A new subparagraph 1(6), proposed by the delegate of China, had been amended by the delegate of the United States of America because paragraph 1 already contained a reference to human and financial resources. The amended proposal, supported by the delegate of China, read: "to strengthen research on health information standards, as well as to promote the standardization and harmonization of health information systems". The delegate of Ghana had proposed inserting "harmonized" before "support" in paragraph 3(2). The delegate of Morocco had proposed adding to paragraph 3(4) the words "and to give priority to programmes that support health information systems"; and, inserting in paragraph 3(5), after "evolving methodologies" the words

“ to keep countries informed about the Health Metrics Network and support countries’ capabilities to become involved in the Network.”

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Avian and pandemic influenza: Item 12.1 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R7, A60/7, A60/8 and A60/INF.DOC./1) (continued from the second meeting, section 2)

- **Developments, response and follow-up** (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R7, and A60/7) (continued from the second meeting, section 2)
- **Application of the International Health Regulations (2005)** (Document A60/8) (continued from the second meeting, section 2)
- **Best practice for sharing influenza viruses and sequence data** (Document A60/INF.DOC./1) (continued from the second meeting, section 2)

The CHAIRMAN said that he would suspend the meeting to allow time for delegations to consider a draft resolution on pandemic influenza preparedness.

The meeting was suspended from 17:00 to 17:35.

Dr VIROJ TANGCHAROENSATHIEN (Thailand), speaking as the chairman of the drafting group, reported that the group had met 12 times, because of the technical and political complexities involved, with the active participation of between 30 and 40 delegations. It had been convinced that a resolution on avian influenza was needed in order to authorize the Director-General to take immediate action in the event of an influenza pandemic. Despite major differences of view, a consensus had been achieved on the following draft resolution:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on avian and pandemic influenza: developments, response and follow-up;²

Reaffirming obligations of States Parties under the International Health Regulations (2005);

Recalling resolutions WHA58.5 and WHA59.2, which expressed concern about the potential of the H5N1 strain of *Influenzavirus A* to cause a pandemic and urged Member States to disseminate to WHO collaborating centres information and relevant biological materials, including clinical specimens and viruses;

Recognizing the sovereign right of States over their biological resources, and the importance of collective action to mitigate public health risks;

Recognizing that intellectual property rights do not and should not prevent Member States from taking measures to protect public health;

Recalling the Jakarta Declaration on Responsible Practices for Sharing Avian Influenza Viruses and Resulting Benefits and the recommendations of the High-Level Meeting on Responsible Practices for Sharing Avian Influenza Viruses and Resulting Benefits (Jakarta, 26–28 March 2007);

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s fifth report and adopted as resolution WHA60.27.

² Documents A60/7, A60/8 and A60/INF.DOC./1.

Recognizing, in particular, the importance of international sharing, with WHO collaborating centres, of clinical specimens and viruses as a contribution to assessment of the pandemic risk, development of pandemic vaccines, updating of diagnostic reagents and test kits, and surveillance for resistance to antiviral medicines;

Stressing the need for effective and transparent international mechanisms aimed at ensuring fair and equitable sharing of benefits, including access to, and distribution of, affordable diagnostics and treatments, including vaccines, to those in need, especially in developing countries, in a timely manner;

Noting WHO's global pandemic influenza action plan to increase vaccine supply and its goal of reducing the gap between the potential vaccine demand and supply expected during an influenza pandemic by expanding over the medium- and long-term the supply of pandemic vaccine,¹

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to continue to support, strengthen and improve the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network and its procedures through the timely sharing of viruses and specimens with WHO collaborating centres, as a foundation of public health, to ensure critical risk assessment and response, and to aim to ensure and promote transparent, fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the generation of information, diagnostics, medicines, vaccines and other technologies;
- (2) to support and promote research to improve the prevention, detection, diagnosis and management of influenza viral infection, with the goal of developing better tools for public health;
- (3) to support WHO as appropriate in order to identify and implement mechanisms referred to in paragraph 2, subparagraph (1);
- (4) to formulate as appropriate and to strengthen existing policies on influenza vaccines as an integral part of their national influenza-pandemic preparedness plans;
- (5) to strengthen where appropriate the capacity of national and regional regulatory authorities to efficiently and effectively carry out necessary measures for the rapid approval of safe and effective candidate influenza vaccines, especially those derived from new subtypes of influenza viruses, and in this respect to encourage international collaboration among regulatory authorities;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to identify and propose, in close consultation with Member States, frameworks and mechanisms that aim to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits, in support of public health, among all Member States, taking strongly into consideration the specific needs of developing countries, such as, but not limited to:
 - (a) innovative financing mechanisms to facilitate timely and affordable procurement of pandemic vaccines for and by Member States in need;
 - (b) facilitation of acquisition by developing countries of capacity for manufacturing in-country influenza vaccine;
 - (c) access to influenza-vaccine viruses developed by WHO for the production of vaccines by all influenza-vaccine manufacturers, particularly in developing countries;
 - (d) in times of public health emergencies of international concern, full access of all influenza-vaccine manufacturers to pandemic influenza-vaccine viruses developed by WHO for the production of pandemic influenza vaccines;

¹ Document WHO/IVB/06.13 – WHO/CDS/EPR/GIP/2006.1.

- (e) technical assistance to developing countries to enhance local research and surveillance capacity, including staff training, with the objective of assuring work on influenza viruses at national and regional levels;
 - (f) upon request, provision of support to Member States, especially developing and affected countries, to improve their capacity to establish and strengthen testing capacity for H5 and other viruses, including identification and characterization, and to establish and strengthen their capacity to meet WHO requirements for becoming a reference laboratory or collaborating centre, if desired;
- (2) to establish, in close consultation with Member States, an international stockpile of vaccines for H5N1 or other influenza viruses of pandemic potential as appropriate, for use in countries in need in a timely manner and according to sound public-health principles, with transparent rules and procedures, informed by expert guidance and evidence, for operation, prioritization, release of stocks, management and oversight;
- (3) to formulate mechanisms and guidelines, in close consultation with Member States, aimed at ensuring fair and equitable distribution of pandemic-influenza vaccines at affordable prices in the event of a pandemic in order to ensure timely availability of such vaccines to Member States in need;
- (4) to mobilize financial, technical and other appropriate support from Member States, vaccine manufacturers, development banks, charitable organizations, private donors and others, in order to implement mechanisms that increase the equitable sharing of benefits as described in paragraph 2, subparagraphs (1), (2) and (3);
- (5) to convene an interdisciplinary working group to revise the terms of reference of WHO collaborating centres, H5 Reference Laboratories, and national influenza centres, devise oversight mechanisms, formulate draft standard terms and conditions for sharing viruses between originating countries and WHO collaborating centres, between the latter and third parties, and to review all relevant documents for sharing influenza viruses and sequencing data, based on mutual trust, transparency, and such overriding principles:
- (a) timely sharing of viruses within the Global Influenza Surveillance Network;
 - (b) application of the same standard terms and conditions to all transactions, as appropriate;
 - (c) timely consultation and sharing of information with originating countries, especially on use outside the Network;
 - (d) for any use of influenza viruses outside the scope of the terms of reference of WHO collaborating centres, H5 Reference Laboratories, and national influenza centres, submission of a request directly to the relevant national influenza centre or other originating laboratory of the country where the virus was collected and require appropriate response from the centre; such requests would be bilateral activities not requiring the intervention of WHO;
 - (e) recognition and respect of the crucial and fundamental role and contribution of countries in providing viruses for the Global Influenza Surveillance Network;
 - (f) increased involvement, participation and recognition of contribution of scientists from originating country in research related to viruses and specimens;
 - (g) attribution of the work and increased co-authorship of scientists from originating countries in scientific publications;
 - (h) due consideration of relevant national and international laws;
- (6) to assure a membership of the interdisciplinary working group consisting of four Member States from each of the six WHO regions, taking into account balanced representation between developed and developing countries and including both experts and policy-makers;
- (7) to convene an intergovernmental meeting to consider the reports by the Director-General on paragraph 2, subparagraphs (1), (2), (3) and (8), and by the interdisciplinary working group on paragraph 2, subparagraph (5), that shall be open to all Member States and regional economic integration organizations;

- (8) to commission an expert report on the patent issues related to influenza viruses and its genes, and report to the intergovernmental meeting;
- (9) to continue to work with Member States on the potential for the conversion of existing biological facilities, such as those for the production of veterinary vaccines, so as to meet the standards for development and production of human vaccines, thereby increasing the availability of pandemic vaccines, and to enable them to receive vaccine seed strains;
- (10) to report on progress on implementation of this resolution, including the work of the intergovernmental meeting, to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly, through Executive Board.

The financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat were as follows:

1. Resolution Avian and pandemic influenza: vaccine production capacity, vaccine stockpile and best practices for sharing influenza viruses and sequence data	
2. Linkage to programme budget	
Area of work:	Expected result
Epidemic alert and response	Support provided to Member States for strengthening national communicable disease surveillance and response systems, including the capability for early detection, investigation of, and response to, epidemics, pandemics and emerging infectious disease threats.
(Briefly indicate the linkage with expected results, indicators, targets, baseline)	
The resolution is consistent with the expected results for the area of work, strategic objective 1 of the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013, namely: to reduce the health, social and economic burden of communicable diseases. The resolution supports immediate action to supplement medium- and longer-term objectives of WHO's global pandemic influenza action plan to increase vaccine supply.	
3. Financial implications	
(a) Total estimated cost for implementation over the "life-cycle" of the resolution (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000, including staff and activities) US\$ 6 343 820. This covers management of the process, not the actual stockpile costs.	
(b) Estimated cost for the biennium 2006-2007 (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000, including staff and activities) US\$ 2 200 000	
(c) Of the estimated cost noted in (b), what can be subsumed under existing programmed activities? US\$ 300 000	
4. Administrative implications	
(a) Implementation locales (indicate the levels of the Organization at which the work will be undertaken and identify the specific regions where relevant) All levels of the Organization, with specific emphasis at regional and country offices in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions, and with international coordination at headquarters.	

- (b) Additional staffing requirements (indicate additional required staff full-time equivalents, noting necessary skills profile)** The equivalent of four full-time staff in the professional category would be required for the period 2007–2009. These staff will ensure the implementation of the second phase of technology transfer, and the organization and management of the processes undertaken through meetings of an interdisciplinary working group and an intergovernmental working group, which will result in updated mechanisms for the functioning of the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network, with regard to the sharing of influenza viruses and the development of a stockpile of H5N1 vaccines
- (c) Time frames (indicate broad time frames for implementation and evaluation)** Projects already under way in this biennium for laboratory strengthening, research coordination and facilitation of specimen shipment will be continued and accelerated through the biennium 2008–2009. The establishment of an interdisciplinary working group and an intergovernmental working group and the creation of a mechanism for stockpiling vaccines and sharing influenza viruses will take place over the next two years. Longer-term implementation will be linked to WHO's global pandemic influenza action plan to increase vaccine supply.

The CHAIRMAN recorded some editorial changes to the text. In paragraph 1(1), the phrase “sharing of viruses and specimens” should be replaced by “sharing of viruses or specimens”. In paragraphs 2(1)(c) and (d), the phrase “developed by WHO” should be replaced by “developed by WHO Collaborating Centres”. In paragraph 2(1)(f), the phrase “other viruses” should be replaced by “other influenza viruses”. Paragraph 2(5)(d), “... the National Influenza Centre” should be amended to “the national influenza centre”.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Dr FAKEYE (Nigeria) noted that millions of dollars had been pledged for the fight against influenza at the International Pledging Conference on Avian and Human Influenza (Beijing, 17–18 January 2006), but those resources had not been equitably distributed among the regions. In order to prevent similar occurrences, paragraph 2 of the resolution should be amended to read: “... equitable sharing of benefits, including funds, in support of ...”.

Mr HOHMAN (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, said that since the draft resolution had been approved, it could not be further amended.

Ms MAZUR (Office of the Legal Counsel) confirmed that any decision to reopen consideration of the draft resolution would require a two-thirds majority.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL said that she had taken due note of the concerns expressed by the delegate of Nigeria. The Beijing conference had not been organized by WHO, which played no part in deciding how the pledged resources would be used.

She expressed her gratitude to all the delegations that had taken part in the work of the drafting group, especially its chairman. The approved draft resolution gave a clear and reassuring message to the world. Despite the real threat of an influenza pandemic and the complexities of protecting people, WHO had proved its unwavering commitment to the fight against influenza.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's fifth report and adopted as resolution WHA60.28.

Dr LUKITO (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the sponsors of one of the original draft resolutions, welcomed the spirit of compromise displayed during the negotiations, and commended the work of the Chairman of the drafting group and the President of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly.

The meeting rose at 18:00.

FOURTEENTH MEETING

Wednesday, 23 May 2007, at 09:35

Chairman: Dr R.R. JEAN LOUIS (Madagascar)

1. FIFTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE A (Document A60/61)

Mrs BU FIGUEROA (Honduras), Rapporteur, read out the draft fifth report of Committee A.

The report was adopted.¹

2. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm: Item 12.7 of the Agenda (Documents A60/14 and A60/14 Add.1) (continued from the eighth meeting)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a revised draft resolution on strategies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol, proposed by an informal working group, together with its financial and administrative implications, which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm, including the addendum on a global assessment of public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol;²

Reaffirming ~~Recalling~~ resolutions WHA32.40 and WHA36.12, **reaffirming** resolution WHA58.26 on ~~public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol~~, and recalling its request to the Director-General to draw up recommendations for effective policies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm, and to develop technical tools that would support Member States in implementing and evaluating recommended strategies and programmes;

Stressing that the strategies and programmes developed pursuant to resolution WHA58.26 should be implemented in accordance with different national health-related needs, priorities and levels of development, and in a balanced, gender-responsive and appropriate way according to national circumstances, such as existing institutional, socioeconomic, religious, cultural and traditional contexts;

1. URGES Member States to continue developing and implementing effective strategies and programmes for reducing the negative health and social consequences of harmful use of alcohol,

¹ See page 311.

² Documents A60/14 and A60/14 Add.1.

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to strengthen and intensify, ~~the work of the Secretariat~~, in consultation with Member States, work on developing and formulating, recommending and, where appropriate, implementing, in accordance with resolution WHA58.26, evidenced-based strategies and interventions on reducing the global burden of public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol, [according to] [which can be adapted to] the different national health-related needs and priorities and the diverse cultural and social circumstances and levels of economic and social development, in order to provide guidance for development and implementation of policies on alcohol; and to develop uniform concepts, indicators and methods ~~to~~ for measuring the health and social consequences of the harmful use of alcohol;
- (1bis) to provide technical support to Member States, on request, for reducing public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol, taking into account the full range of its health, social and economic consequences;
- (2bis) to continue to collaborate with all stakeholders in accordance with resolution WHA58.26;
- (2ter) to [submit a] report through the Executive Board to the Sixty-[first] [second] World Health Assembly on progress made in implementation of this resolution [and strategic directions, [Sweden] meeting human, financial and technical assistance needs of Member States, and international cooperation for these purposes, and on shortcomings and strengths of primary health-care systems to address these issues]. [Cuba]

1. Resolution Strategies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol	
2. Linkage to programme budget	
Biennium 2006–2007	Expected results
Area of work	
Mental health and substance abuse	5. Guidance and support provided to countries for development of evidence-based strategies, programmes and interventions for prevention and management of disorders related to substance use and reducing the adverse health and social consequences of use of alcohol and other psychoactive substances.
Biennium 2008–2009	
Strategic objective: 6	4. Evidence-based and ethical policies, strategies, recommendations, standards and guidelines developed, and technical support provided to Member States with a high or increasing burden of disease or death associated with alcohol, drugs and other psychoactive substance use, enabling them to strengthen institutions in order to combat or prevent the public health problems concerned.
(Briefly indicate the linkage with expected results, indicators, targets, baseline)	
The resolution will strengthen and intensify the Secretariat's work, in consultation with Member States, on developing, recommending and - where appropriate - implementing evidence-based strategies and interventions on reducing the global burden of public-health problems caused by the harmful use of alcohol; on providing technical support, when requested, to Member States; and on developing uniform concepts, indicators and methods for measuring the health and social consequences of the harmful use of alcohol.	
3. Financial implications The financial implications will depend on the decision taken by the Health Assembly with regard to operational paragraph 2.1 of the draft resolution. Option (i) refers to "[according to]" and implies a broader range of strategies and interventions to be developed according to country needs mentioned in para 2.1; it also involves a more extensive consultation process. Option (ii) refers to "[which can be adapted to]" and implies a more general set of strategies and interventions that can be adapted to the different country needs.	

(a) Total estimated cost for implementation over the “life-cycle” of the resolution (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000, including staff and activities)

Option (i): US\$ 22 460 000

Option (ii): US\$ 19 780 000

(b) Estimated cost for the biennium 2006–2007 (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000, including staff and activities)

Option (i) US\$ 3 290 000 (US\$ 13 170 000, estimated cost for the biennium 2008–2009)

Option (ii) US\$ 2 756 000 (US\$ 11 024 000, estimated cost for the biennium 2008–2009)

(c) Of the estimated cost noted in (b), what can be subsumed under existing programmed activities? Nil for the biennium 2006–2007 for options (i) and (ii); US\$ 10 400 000 for the biennium 2008–2009 for options (i) and (ii)

4. Administrative implications

(a) Implementation locales (indicate the levels of the Organization at which the work will be undertaken and identify the specific regions where relevant)

Work will mainly take place at the global level, but consultations with Member States will be organized as follows: for option (i), according to the criteria implied by “[according to]” in paragraph 2.1; for option (ii), in the six regions.

(b) Additional staffing requirements (indicate additional required staff full-time equivalents, noting necessary skills profile)

Option (i): Beginning in 2007 and continuing during the biennium 2008–2009, four additional staff in the professional category, and two additional staff in the general service category will be required at headquarters. No additional staff will be required at regional level.

Option (ii): Beginning in 2007 and continuing during the biennium 2008–2009, two additional staff in the professional category, and one additional general staff member will be required at headquarters. No additional staff will be required at regional level.

(c) Time frames (indicate broad time frames for implementation and evaluation)

The activities have to be initiated in 2007 so that the main tasks can be accomplished before the Sixty-second World Health Assembly. The work will be concentrated on: developing strategies and interventions in the context of intensive consultation with Member States, and with the appropriate engagement of all stakeholders; and on developing uniform concepts, indicators and methods for measuring the health and social consequences of harmful use of alcohol.

Option (i) envisages a more extensive consultation process with Member States.

Dr BLOOMFIELD (New Zealand), speaking in his capacity as chairman of the informal working group, emphasized that, although there had been substantial support for the work to reduce alcohol-related harm, the many views on how best to deal with the issue were reflected in the fact that there had been five versions of the draft resolution. The working group had failed to reach consensus, but the draft resolution before the Committee represented the progress made.

The following corrections should be made to the draft text: in the third preambular paragraph “the” should be replaced with “these” between “that” and “strategies”; in paragraph 2(1), “the work of the Secretariat” and “developing” should be reinstated, “formulating” deleted, and “provide guidance” replaced with “serve as a guide”; in paragraph 2(1bis), “on request” should be changed to “when requested”; in paragraph 2(2bis) “collaborate” should be replaced by “engage”, and “in their ongoing work” added after and “WHA58.26”; and in paragraph 2(2ter) a left square bracket should be inserted before “meeting”.

The CHAIRMAN proposed that the draft resolution and its financial implications should be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

Mr LEÓN GONZÁLEZ (Cuba) drew attention to two elements agreed in the drafting group that appeared to have been overlooked. In the third preambular paragraph, the phrase “developed pursuant to resolution WHA58.26” should not have been included. In paragraph 2(2ter), the word “on” should have been inserted before “strategic” and the word “meeting” after “[Sweden]” should have been deleted.

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) said that there had been much discussion about the violence that resulted from the harmful use of alcohol, yet paragraph 1 referred simply to the “negative health and social consequences”. It was important that there should be specific reference to violence in that paragraph.

Mr GAUDÊNCIO (Brazil) noted that the harmful use of alcohol accounted for around 3.2% of global mortality and 4% of disability-adjusted life-years lost. In Latin America, the figures were four times the global average. Alcohol consumption was implicated in a large proportion of road traffic crashes, violence in general and domestic violence in particular, and the public cost was rising steadily. Given that situation, it was high time for WHO to move forward by providing countries with general guidelines for tackling the consequences of harmful use of alcohol. Consultations with all interested parties must continue, the advertising of alcoholic beverages must be regulated and public campaigns must provide information, raise awareness and mobilize public opinion. The revised text was intended to spur WHO into action, but if no consensus could be reached, it would be better to go back to the draft resolution proposed by New Zealand and Sweden and try to move forward on that basis.

Mr PETTERSSON (Sweden) said that his delegation had proposed the draft resolution out of concern about the need to make progress. With some other delegations, it had also sponsored a second draft resolution. Unfortunately, by the time the drafting group had completed its work the previous day, numerous new amendments had been proposed and the revised version no longer reflected the intentions of the original, and his delegation could not support it. If the issue was to be referred to the Executive Board, he proposed forwarding the draft resolution as originally submitted by New Zealand and Sweden after consultation in an informal working group, as it provided a better basis for discussion. He requested the Director-General to continue to work on implementing resolution WHA58.26 and to present evidence-based strategies and interventions for reducing the harmful use of alcohol. He deeply regretted that one Member State had been unable to cooperate constructively on the issue, which was of fundamental importance to people’s health.

Dr HIGUCHI (Japan) said that the harmful use of alcohol was having serious consequences for health worldwide. It was therefore regrettable that agreement had not been reached on the text of the draft resolution. He requested the Director-General to prioritize and scale up work on resolution WHA58.26.

Mr LEÓN GONZÁLEZ (Cuba) supported the statement made by the chairman of the working group and endorsed the proposal to refer the latest version of the draft resolution, together with all earlier versions, to the Executive Board.

Decision: The Sixtieth World Health Assembly decided to request that an item entitled “Strategies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol” and related documents discussed at the Health Assembly be included in the agenda of the 122nd session of the Executive Board, to be held in January 2008, and asked the Director-General, in the interim, to continue her work on that question.

The decision was adopted.¹

¹ Decision WHA60(10).

3. CLOSURE

After the customary exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRMAN declared the work of Committee A completed.

The meeting rose at 10:15.

COMMITTEE B

FIRST MEETING

Wednesday, 16 May 2007, scheduled at 16:35

Chairman: Mr T. ZELTNER (Switzerland)

1. OPENING OF THE COMMITTEE: Item 13 of the Agenda (Document A60/52)

The CHAIRMAN welcomed participants and reminded the Committee that representatives of the Executive Board, namely Dr Sadasivan and Dr Suwit Wibulpolprasert, would express the Board's views and explain the rationale behind recommendations made by the Board for the Health Assembly's consideration.

He drew the Committee's attention to document A60/52,¹ in which Mr Francis (Trinidad and Tobago) and Dr Yoosuf (Maldives) were nominated for the offices of Vice-Chairmen of Committee B, and Mr bin M. Al-Fakheri (Saudi Arabia) was nominated for the office of Rapporteur.

Decision: Committee B elected Mr D. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago) and Dr A.A. Yoosuf (Maldives) as Vice-Chairmen, and Mr H. bin M. Al-Fakheri (Saudi Arabia) as Rapporteur.²

2. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN appealed to speakers to limit their statements to a maximum of three minutes. Document EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, to which frequent reference would be made, contained the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its previous two sessions.

He reminded the Committee that at its meeting on 14 May 2005 the General Committee had agreed that items would be taken in the order in which they appeared in the agenda, with the exception of item 15.7 (Appointment of the External Auditor), which would be considered on 17 May. Items 12.16 to 12.21, which had been transferred from Committee A, would be considered after the items initially assigned to the Committee.

Mrs SIEFKER-EBERLE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, formally requested the Committee to invite the European Commission to participate without vote, in accordance with Rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, in the deliberations on items 12.16 to 12.21, which had been transferred from Committee A. The reason was that the European Community shared competence with European Union Member States in the areas covered by those items.

¹ See page 309.

² Decision WHA60(4).

The CHAIRMAN took it that the suggested working arrangements were acceptable to the Committee.

It was so agreed.

3. HEALTH CONDITIONS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM, AND IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN:

Item 14 of the Agenda (Documents A60/29, A60/29 Add.1, A60/INF.DOC./4, A60/INF.DOC./5 and A60/INF.DOC./7)

The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to a draft resolution proposed by the delegations of Algeria, Bahrain, Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates, which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Mindful of the basic principle established in the Constitution of WHO, which affirms that the health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security;

Recalling all its previous resolutions on health conditions in the occupied Arab territories;

Expressing appreciation for the report of the Director-General on the health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;¹

Expressing its concern at the deterioration of economic and health conditions as well as the humanitarian crisis resulting from the continued occupation and the severe restrictions imposed by Israel, the occupying power;

Expressing its concern also at the health crisis and rising levels of food insecurity in the occupied Palestinian territory due to Israel's withholding of Palestinian customs revenues;

Affirming the need for guaranteeing universal coverage of health services and for preserving the functions of the public health services in the occupied Palestinian territory;

Recognizing that the acute shortage of financial and medical resources in the Palestinian Ministry of Health, which is responsible for running and financing public health services, jeopardizes the access of the Palestinian population to curative and preventive services;

Affirming the right of Palestinian patients and medical staff to have access to the Palestinian health institutions in occupied east Jerusalem;

Deploring the incidents involving lack of respect and protection for Palestinian ambulances and medical personnel by the Israeli army, which led to casualties among Palestinian medical personnel, as well as the restrictions on movement imposed on them by Israel, the occupying power, in violation of international humanitarian law;

Expressing deep concern at the grave implication of the wall on the accessibility and quality of medical services received by the Palestinian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem;

Expressing deep concern also at the serious implications on pregnant women and patients of Israeli restriction of movement imposed on Palestinian ambulances and medical personnel;

1. DEMANDS that Israel, the occupying power:

- (1) lift the closure in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly the closure of the crossing points of the occupied Gaza Strip that are causing the serious shortage of drugs

¹ Document A60/29.

and medical supplies therein and comply in this regard with the provisions of the Israeli-Palestinian Agreement on Movement and Access of November 2005;

(2) comply with the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the wall which, inter alia, has grave implications on the accessibility and quality of medical services received by the Palestinian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem;

(3) facilitate the access of Palestinian patients and medical staff to the Palestinian health institutions in occupied east Jerusalem;

(4) pay the Palestinian Authority regularly and without delay its customs and health insurance revenues in order to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities with respect to basic human needs, including health services;

(5) ensure unhindered and safe passage for Palestinian ambulances as well as respect and protection of medical personnel, in compliance with international humanitarian law;

(6) improve the living and medical conditions of Palestinian detainees, particularly children, women and patients;

(7) facilitate the transit and entry of medicine and medical equipment to the occupied Palestinian territory;

(8) shoulder its responsibility towards the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people and their daily access to humanitarian aid, including food and medicine, in compliance with international humanitarian law;

(9) halt immediately all its practices, policies and plans, including its policy of closure, that seriously affect the health conditions of civilians under occupation;

2. URGES Member States and intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations:

(1) to help overcome the health crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory by providing assistance to the Palestinian people;

(2) to provide financial and technical support to public health and veterinary services in order to implement the Palestinian national plan for fighting the potential spread of avian influenza in the occupied Palestinian territory;

(3) to help lift the financial sanctions imposed on the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory;

(4) to support and assist the Palestinian Ministry of Health in carrying out its duties, including running and financing public health services;

(5) to remind Israel, the occupying power, to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949;

3. EXPRESSES its deep appreciation to the Director-General for:

(1) the efforts to provide necessary assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and to the Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan;

(2) organizing a one-day emergency meeting on the health crisis in the occupied Palestinian territory and for the assistance provided as a result thereof;

4. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to provide support to the Palestinian health and veterinary services in establishing a modern public health laboratory capable to diagnose avian influenza in humans and animals;

(2) to submit a fact-finding report on the health and economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan;

(3) to provide health-related technical assistance to the Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan;

(4) to continue providing necessary technical assistance to meet the health needs of the Palestinian people, including the handicapped and injured;

- (5) to support the development of the health system in Palestine, including development of human resources;
- (6) to assist in determining the so far inexplicable causes of fatal injuries and suffering afflicting Palestinian victims of Israeli attacks;
- (7) to report on implementation of this resolution to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly.

Mr SHOUKRY (Egypt), introducing the draft resolution, said that it reflected the situation of the Palestinian people after long years of Israeli occupation in flagrant violation of basic human rights. The Israeli occupation had imposed sanctions and a separation wall, denying humanitarian and medical assistance and thus causing a severe humanitarian crisis. The international community could not turn a blind eye to the situation. The draft resolution sought to focus world attention on the plight of the Palestinian people and the need for appropriate measures to prevent further deterioration of the situation. Its sponsors called on Israel to lift the sanctions and halt the construction of the separation wall, which was harmful to the Palestinian people and contrary to a 2004 decision of the International Court of Justice. The text also urged the international community to take all possible steps to help the Palestinian people to improve their health conditions. WHO, as the leading specialized agency dealing with health throughout the world, should ensure that the Palestinian people received technical assistance, and should do more to improve the health situation and health infrastructure in Palestine.

The fact that such a draft resolution was repeatedly presented to the Health Assembly was largely a consequence of Israeli practices day after day. Israel, as an occupying power, should meet its international obligations and responsibilities. The draft resolution sought to uphold the right of the Palestinian people to decent health conditions, to force Israel to accept its responsibilities and to ensure that a people under occupation was not denied its basic rights. As the issues covered were of a purely medical nature, the Health Assembly should assume its responsibilities without hesitation.

He proposed amending paragraph 2(3) to read: “to help lift the restrictions and obstacles imposed on the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories”. The amendment reflected the sponsors’ desire to show flexibility with a view to meeting the concerns of all Member States.

Dr AL-HOUSAMI (Syrian Arab Republic) described the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territory as a dangerous epidemic that had had a serious impact on the lives of the people living there. He did not wish to politicize the debate. The current discussions were aimed not at liberating the territory but at preventing the population from suffering as a result of the conditions prevailing under the occupation. It was wrong to distinguish between good occupation and bad occupation. The practices of the Israeli occupation force were extremely detrimental to all Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, which had become one big prison, and were denying the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan their basic human rights to health care, housing and living on their own land. Attempts were even being made to compel Arabs in the occupied Golan to assume Israeli nationality, and the health authorities were struggling to provide basic services, which had become prohibitively expensive to anyone not carrying Israeli identity papers. Arab villages were suffering from a lack of clinics and ambulances, and specialist treatment, especially in the fields of radiology and maternal and child health care, was practically non-existent. Doctors and medical staff were being denied permits to work in the occupied Golan, and young people were prevented from enrolling in medical schools unless they applied for Israeli nationality. In the meantime, every attempt on the part of the Syrian Arab Republic to alleviate the plight of the local population by setting up health centres and a specialized hospital, with the support of humanitarian organizations and the specialized agencies of the United Nations, had been obstructed. Treatment was being denied to Syrian detainees suffering from various ailments caused by physical and mental torture in Israeli prisons, with some even having died as a result. The disposal of radioactive uranium and other toxic waste, some of which had a lifespan of 30 to 50 years, would create a public health emergency once the containers began to disintegrate.

He requested the sending of a fact-finding mission to the region and the preparation of a report for submission to the next Health Assembly. The previous mission assigned to implement resolution

WHA59.3 had been unable to visit the occupied Golan because the Israeli authorities had refused to allow it to enter the area.

He supported the draft resolution as presented by the delegate of Egypt.

Mr LEVANON (Israel) declined to reply to the comments of the previous speaker whose description of the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan had been wholly inaccurate. He acknowledged the existence of health concerns in the Palestinian territories and that the local population was entitled to the best health care available. But instead of devoting a separate agenda item to those matters at every single session, the Health Assembly could discuss them under any of the broader items relating to universal health concerns, including the other 45 crisis situations identified by WHO. Furthermore, the provision and quality of medical care for Palestinians had been the responsibility of the Palestinian authorities since 1995. A first step towards improving the situation and restoring good relations would be Palestinian acceptance of the three benchmarks established by the Middle East Quartet, namely a commitment to renounce violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Road Map. The chances of political progress had been hampered by the fact that all ties with Israel had been severed, and the Hamas-led government of national unity, with whom even the international community was reluctant to engage, had not improved the situation.

Nevertheless, Israel had continued to assist the Palestinian people. Over the previous year, increasing numbers of patients, an average of 200 a day, had been treated in Israeli hospitals, even though the Palestinian Authority had halted payments for the services. Increasing numbers of ambulances were being admitted into the country without delays in emergencies, on humanitarian grounds, despite well-documented cases of Palestinian factions using them to transport terrorists and explosives. On average, 47 truckloads of medical supplies were entering the Gaza Strip each day. Selected Palestinian health professionals had enrolled in training programmes at Israeli hospitals; WHO representatives and experts had supported and overseen projects to encourage joint Israeli-Palestinian efforts to tackle the previous year's influenza pandemic: Palestinian and Israeli health experts had met in Jerusalem on 20 April 2007 to discuss a joint response to any future outbreak of avian influenza in the region.

The draft resolution was groundless, biased and highly political in its intentions. It would encourage the extremist Palestinian factions responsible for not only the daily rocket attacks on Israel – praised by the leaders of Hamas – that just the previous day had wounded more than 20 people in the southern city of Sderot, but also the intra-Palestinian violence in the territories, which, according to a Palestinian human rights group, had claimed over 147 lives, including 10 children, in the first three months of 2007. The health of the Palestinian people might have been markedly different had the resolution's sponsors refrained from spreading unfounded allegations and diverting the world's attention away from genuine emergencies, and instead sought to work with Israel in a spirit of cooperation in order to overcome the difficulties and to provide a better health system.

Mr TICHENOR (United States of America) strongly regretted that the draft resolution was interjecting political considerations into the deliberations of the global health body. It would neither further the search for peace in the Middle East nor improve the health of those living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The United States cared deeply about the health of the Palestinian people and in order to help to meet their humanitarian needs it had invested US\$ 24.2 million in maternal and child health and nutrition activities and contributed US\$ 30 million to an emergency medical assistance project providing pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and equipment to the Palestinian health sector, US\$ 27.4 million to WFP's food assistance activities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and US\$ 12 million to support emergency intervention in small-scale water and sanitary projects. It had given US\$ 50 million to the 2006 UNRWA emergency appeal, which had helped Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip whose livelihoods and health needs had been badly affected by the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority Government's policy choices, and enabled UNRWA to support five fixed health stations and five mobile units providing health services to West Bank Palestinians who could no longer travel to their former health clinics. His country would continue to seek ways to

meet the basic needs of the Palestinian people and would encourage others to join it in that effort. Nevertheless, the members of the Middle East Quartet continued to maintain that any Palestinian government must renounce violence, recognize Israel and respect previous agreements and obligations between the parties.

Much of the draft resolution was biased and political. It ignored the obligation of the Palestinian Authority to govern responsibly, to end terror and to commit itself to the path of a peaceful resolution in search of a two-state solution called for in the Road Map, with a Palestinian State and Israel living side by side in peace and security thus allowing the Palestinian people's rightful health needs and other aspirations to be realized. He opposed the draft resolution and requested a roll-call vote.

Dr BURAYZAT (Jordan) said that the difficulties and complexities of the health situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan were evident from international reports submitted to the Health Assembly and because people from Jordan could see the situation with their own eyes. Jordan was supporting two hospitals in Palestine, to which it sent medicines on a regular basis. Over the past two years, programmes run by the Ministry of Health had been jeopardized, primary health care services had ceased to operate, accident and emergency departments in hospitals had been closed down, and the distribution of medicines for treatment of chronic illnesses had become almost impossible. International aid did sometimes reach those who needed it, but it was insufficient, not covering even 10% of the health and medical needs of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory.

The delegate of Israel had referred to the political aspects of the situation, but sick people should not have to pay the price of a difficult political situation. Inevitably there were political issues, such as the recognition of Israel and adherence to international agreements, but they were not appropriate topics for debate within an international health forum. The core issue in the current debate was the fundamental right of the Palestinian people to appropriate health care, and the task of the Committee was to find a solution to the existing problems on the ground.

Arab countries had been seeking to hold out an olive branch to Israel, but to no avail. If Israel wanted to improve the political situation, it should respond to those various initiatives. Assistance would be needed from Israel if the humanitarian situation was to be resolved. Jordan was doing all that it could to help, but the situation demanded more aid, from neighbouring countries and the rest of the world. He thanked all the international organizations and bodies, including UNWRA and WHO, that had provided assistance and support to the Palestinian people. Several Arab countries provided medical equipment to hospitals and clinics, but the Palestinians needed to be able to move around freely in order to benefit from such aid.

He supported the draft resolution.

Dr AMMAR (Lebanon) said that, beyond the dire economic situation, the occupation was putting barriers in the way of movement of the Palestinian people, making access to medical care difficult. The building of the wall, the sealing-off of territories, the establishment of crossing points which were sometimes closed, the levying of customs dues and difficulties relating to medical insurance were all examples of such barriers.

He urged WHO to apply extraordinary measures to avert a humanitarian and health-related disaster in the occupied Palestinian territory, east Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan. He supported the draft resolution, as amended by the delegate of Egypt; it was the minimum that could be undertaken to halt the deterioration of the health situation.

It was regrettable that the delegate of Israel should have used the current forum to say that passage of the resolution would not result in a change in Israeli policy or any positive outcome, thereby demonstrating Israel's lack of respect for decisions and resolutions adopted by the Health Assembly and the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr MOKHTARI (Islamic Republic of Iran) observed that the Committee was once again hearing facts about the grave health situation of the Palestinian people under occupation, and the hardships and difficulties that they had to face in their daily life. The impact of the brutal occupation

on the physical, mental and social health of the Palestinians was beyond imagination. Fortunately WHO still offered a beacon of hope, by maintaining its presence in Palestine and by continuing its engagement with the Palestinian authorities. At the same time, it was regrettable that all WHO's efforts, which under normal circumstances should have helped to build Palestinian medical infrastructures for the next generation, instead had to be largely expended on undoing harm and wrongs perpetrated by the forces of occupation. He was especially concerned about the health of the Palestinians after the brutal war waged by Israel in 2006, particularly those inside the occupied territories and those living in Lebanon, and about the consequences for the health of ordinary people in Palestine of the Israeli policy of collective punishment.

He strongly supported the draft resolution and urged all Member States to strive for the well-being of the Palestinians and Syrians under occupation, and to ensure that occupation, oppression and injustice did not cast a shadow over the noble goal of health for human beings.

Dr AL-AKHRAS (Palestine) said that the number of barriers and checkpoints had increased in the occupied Palestinian territory – to 547 in 2006, 40% more than in 2005. The Israeli forces also hampered the work of medical institutions and teams, and restricted ambulances' access to health centres and hospitals, leading to the death of a great many sick people. Up to 7 April 2007, there had been 142 deaths at the military posts. In addition, women had given birth at the barriers, with Israeli soldiers often completely ignoring their appeals for help.

Palestinians receiving medical treatment in Israel were forced to pay. A request for transfer to a Palestinian hospital in east Jerusalem could be processed only in an Israeli hospital, and that process too was subject to a fee. In addition, Israeli hospitals placed restrictions on medical insurance. Israel was also hampering the entry of medicines and medical equipment from abroad. Much of the equipment, when finally received, was no longer usable. The Palestinian Authority had tried to send personnel to receive medical training in Israel, but many obstacles had been placed in their way. Israeli forces paid no attention to environmental problems if they affected only the Palestinians, taking remedial action only if there was an ecological threat to Israel. The Israeli authorities represented a threat to the state of health of the Palestinian people, and Israel should abide by all international agreements and apply them to everyone equally.

Mr M.N. KHAN (Pakistan) said that the report on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the occupied Syrian Golan made sad and shameful reading. What was happening in Palestine was ethically, religiously, morally, politically and medically wrong. It was time for the human race to pull together and go forward. Unlike the Dark Ages, nowadays everyone could become instantly aware of the wrongs being done, of Palestinian boys being brutally kicked and humiliated, of young Palestinian girls being humiliatingly searched at Israeli checkpoints. The humiliation and the insanity had to be stopped. The killings of civilians should be condemned. If the Israelis and the Palestinians could change places, then Israel would rapidly understand the suffering that it was inflicting.

The fact-finding mission called for in the draft resolution was important, and the major countries of the world should participate. The United States of America should play a historical role. Who understood freedom better than the people of that nation? Indeed, who better than the Israelis understood oppression? With their history, they should be the most compassionate people in the world.

He supported the draft resolution purely for humanitarian reasons, not political ones.

The meeting rose at 17:40.

SECOND MEETING

Thursday, 17 May 2007, at 09:15

Chairman: Mr T. ZELTNER (Switzerland)
later: Mr D. FRANCIS (Trinidad and Tobago)

1. HEALTH CONDITIONS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM, AND IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN:
Item 14 of the Agenda (Documents A60/29, A60/29 Add.1, A60/INF.DOC./4, A60/INF.DOC./5 and A60/INF.DOC./7) (continued)

Mr LY (Senegal) said that, despite WHO's action in the occupied Palestinian territory,¹ the Palestinian Authority's health ministry was finding it difficult, as a result of suspension of the principal donors' contributions, to ensure health service delivery, implement health action programmes and even to pay staff salaries. Imperfect compromises were no solution to the problem and failed to meet WHO's constitutional goal of "enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health".

Senegal continued to uphold the right of the peoples of the occupied territories to complete physical, mental and social well-being. The political situation could not serve as an alibi for ongoing tragedies with intolerable humanitarian and health consequences. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr BIN RAHMAT (Malaysia) welcomed the continued consideration of the current agenda item. The health of all peoples was fundamental to peace and security, but, over the years, health conditions in the occupied Arab territories, especially occupied Palestine, had not improved. A crisis had been created by the occupying power's intransigent policies. WHO should convince the international community to react urgently to the problems highlighted in the Secretariat's reports; and the international community should revive the national health system in the occupied territories by providing funding.

As a sponsor of the draft resolution, he urged the Committee to support it.

Dr GONZÁLEZ (Cuba) said that the Secretariat's reports sadly confirmed the worsening situation in the occupied territories caused by Israel's aggressive actions. Restrictions on freedom of movement had damaged the economy and increased unemployment. Food insecurity was widespread, and chronic malnutrition was rising. Israel's aggressive acts in 2006 had brought the health system to the brink of collapse. The Health Assembly had repeatedly called on Israel to end its restrictive measures.

The cause of the Palestinian people had aroused worldwide solidarity and sympathy. Israel's illegal occupation, and its flagrant violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, had been condemned. The so-called Palestinian question had led to wars, prolonged occupation and fruitless attempts at a settlement. The Palestinian people remained subject to injustice and were denied self-determination. Cuba upheld their inalienable right to establish an independent, sovereign state; it called for the unconditional return of all Arab territories occupied by Israel, and it reiterated the illegal nature of all Israeli settlements established in the occupied Arab territories since 1967. For more than

¹ Documents A60/29 and A60/29 Add.1.

half a century, the United Nations General Assembly and the Health Assembly had been approving many reports and resolutions condemning the violations of the Palestinian people's rights, but Israel had accepted none of them. He called upon all Member States to support the draft resolution.

Mr FU Cong (China) said that the question of the occupied territories had been debated for half a century, but the peoples concerned continued to suffer. During the past year their isolation and economic hardship had worsened; food and fuel were in short supply, the infrastructure had deteriorated, and the medical and health services had been paralysed. Medical and other aid could not be delivered. China opposed such isolation and the consequent decline in health conditions; it called on the international community to take measures in order to alleviate the Palestinian people's suffering.

China advocated a definite solution to the problems of the occupied territories, without which there could be no peace in the Middle East. It called for a political settlement on the basis of United Nations resolutions, and remained ready to work to that end. For those reasons, he supported the draft resolution.

Mrs AL QASSIMI (United Arab Emirates) observed that the situation in the occupied territories was rapidly worsening, with many people living below the poverty line. Sanctions by the occupying power had adversely affected programmes in the health sector and many others; the impending humanitarian crisis must be dealt with rapidly. Security measures were creating great difficulties, for example, for the movement of ambulances and the treatment of injuries arising from conflicts.

She regretted that the fact-finding report did not deal with the situation in the occupied Syrian Golan. Nevertheless, it cited many examples of the gravity of the situation, which called for appropriate action by the international community.

Mr ELBEY (Algeria) supported the previous speakers' observations on the health conditions in the occupied territories and the need for action by the international community. Israeli practices were making it impossible to maintain minimum health standards. Likewise, sanctions and the blockade against an elected government were a serious obstacle to the provision of health services. He supported the Human Rights Council's proposal to send a fact-finding mission and called on the Health Assembly to do likewise, putting pressure on Israel to cease its oppression. The Health Assembly must take seriously its objective of health for all. He called on the whole international community to ensure that the situation in the occupied territories did not deteriorate further.

Mrs VIELMA (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that she had noted the Secretariat's reports and appreciated the Organization's efforts to help to alleviate the serious health situation of the Palestinian people. She firmly supported the draft resolution as an important step towards a solution. However, there should also be an accompanying call to the international community for an effort to make Israel lift the blockade on the occupied Palestinian territories and respect their citizens' right to health. The grave situation there had led to a shortage of medical, surgical and basic health services. She called on the Israeli Government to halt the building of the security wall and the restrictions on personal movement, which were a clear violation of the Palestinian people's human rights.

Mr RADEBE (South Africa) said that the Health Assembly had to give special attention to the humanitarian crisis in the occupied territories, especially the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian people needed WHO's help more than ever, and he was concerned at the lack of health-care services, the logistical and professional constraints on care providers, and the declining nutritional status of women and of children under five.

The reports were balanced, calling for reasonable action to ensure that the Palestinian people could exercise their basic human rights, including that of access to health care. South Africa was finalizing proposals in order to contribute to WHO's work through the consolidated appeals process being proposed by the United Nations. South Africa was committed to upholding the dignity of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, to the right of both to live in peace and security, and to achieving a

solution. In the meantime, every effort should be made to meet the Palestinian people's health needs. For those reasons he supported the draft resolution.

Dr BUDIHARDJA (Indonesia) expressed deep concern at the dire health situation which persisted in the occupied territories as a result of the occupying power's restrictions, closures and aggression. It would degenerate into a major disaster unless urgent remedial action was taken. Indonesia supported providing humanitarian assistance, and maintaining and improving the presence of WHO for the essential relief and basic medical care so desperately needed. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr AL-MUBARAK (Kuwait) said that it was high time to move away from political issues and concentrate on the humanitarian disaster in the occupied territories which was worsening rapidly, because of the occupying forces' actions and inhumane measures. She supported the draft resolution, and called for all to uphold the initiative of health for all. Urgent measures were needed to prevent any further deterioration of the situation, and she called on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, in accordance with international resolutions. Kuwait wanted the Director-General to visit the territories in order to see conditions for herself.

Mr LANDOULSI (Tunisia) said that the Israeli forces had seriously affected the provision of health services in the occupied territories. The situation was deteriorating rapidly and exacerbated by the international boycott. Israel's practice of targeting health services violated basic human rights and breached international law. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr AL-HOUSAMI (Syrian Arab Republic) refuted the claim by the delegate of Israel that the draft resolution was an attempt to politicize the work of the Health Assembly and that its adoption would not lead to an improvement of the health situation in the occupied territories but would hamper any humanitarian attempts on the part of the international community. The report on health conditions in the territories was based on sources including Israeli ones. For example, attempts to test medicines on Arab detainees in Israeli prisons had been reported by Israeli political figures and the disposal of toxic waste in the occupied territories had been reported in the Israeli press. Israeli landmines also remained a constant threat to the inhabitants of the Syrian Golan. He urged the Committee to support the draft resolution, contribute to improved health conditions and distance themselves from the criminal attempt to undermine the quality of life of those in the occupied territories. He called on the delegation of the United States of America to accept its responsibility as a neutral partner in the process, and for the world to show compassion for the situation of the Syrian people.

Ms FURMAN (Israel) said that, although her delegation was always prepared to enter into meaningful discussion, the groundless comments made by the delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic did not merit a response.

The CHAIRMAN recalled the proposal to proceed to a roll-call vote.

At the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, Mr BURCI (Legal Counsel) explained the modalities for the roll-call vote. The Member States whose right to vote had been suspended by virtue of Article 7 of the Constitution, or which were not represented at the Health Assembly and would therefore be unable to participate in the vote were: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Central African Republic, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Fiji, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Kyrgyzstan, Niue, Saint Lucia, Somalia.

A vote was taken by roll-call, the names of the Member States being called in the English alphabetical order, starting with Iceland, the letter I having been determined by lot.

The result of the vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against: Australia, Canada, Israel, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, United States of America.

Abstaining: Cambodia, Cook Islands, El Salvador, Guatemala, Kiribati, Liberia, Malawi, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago.

Absent: Albania, Bahamas, Belarus, Benin, Brazil, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Grenada, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nauru, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Suriname, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Zambia.

The draft resolution, as amended, was therefore approved by 106 votes to 7, with 12 abstentions.¹

Mr ESTRELA DE CARVALHO (Brazil) explained that Latin American and Caribbean Group Member States and other Latin American countries had been unable to be present for the vote because of their participation in discussions on other draft documents.

Mr OLDHAM (Canada), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his country remained deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan and was therefore providing assistance to the Palestinian people through nongovernmental and multilateral organizations. The resolution represented a one-sided view of the health-care needs of the Palestinian people, by focusing exclusively on the actions of Israel. While his country recognized that Israel had an important role to play in facilitating the humanitarian well-being of the Palestinian people, the text approved remained the only resolution at the Health Assembly which explicitly singled out one conflict. His country had therefore decided to vote against the resolution.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as a resolution WHA60.2.

Ms SIEFKER-EBERLE (Germany), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the European Union and in explanation of vote, expressed deep concern about deteriorating health in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan. Primarily for that reason the European Union Members had voted in favour of the resolution. The resolution ought to have reflected a more balanced approach to the relevant issues and a more balanced reading of the situation; issues included the responsibilities of the Palestinian authorities, such as good governance, improving security in the area, ending intra-Palestinian violence and consolidating the ceasefire. The European Union remained ready to work with, and resume direct assistance to, a Palestinian government whose policy and actions reflected the Quartet principles, in accordance with the European Union Council Conclusions of 23 April 2007.

The European Union and its Member States remained the largest contributor of assistance to the Palestinian people, having pledged some €650 million in 2006, a figure that demonstrated the importance they attached to the needs of the Palestinian people, including health care, and their concern about the health impact of the conflict on all peoples in the region.

Dr SADASIVAN (Singapore), speaking in explanation of vote, recalled that his country had consistently supported all efforts to bring a just and lasting peace to the Middle East and had taken a principled stand on the right of the Palestinian people to a homeland and the two-State solution. The Health Assembly was not an appropriate forum for the discussion of political issues.

Mr MORARU (Republic of Moldova), speaking in explanation of vote, said that his delegation aligned itself with the position of the European Union.

2. FINANCIAL MATTERS: Item 15 of the Agenda

Unaudited interim financial report on the accounts of WHO for 2006 and comments thereon made by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board: Item 15.1 of the Agenda (Documents A60/30, A60/30 Add.1 and A60/41)

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the draft resolution recommended in paragraph 6 of document A60/41.

The draft resolution was approved.¹

Interim report of the External Auditor: Item 15.2 of the Agenda (Documents A60/31 and A60/45)

Mr RAO (Representative of the External Auditor) presented the interim results of the external audit of WHO for the financial period 2006–2007 on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, the External Auditor. The practice of submitting an interim report had been continued, and that report² contained the results of an audit carried out in the first year of the current financial period. The opinion on the financial statements of WHO for the financial period 2006–2007 would be presented to the Health Assembly in 2008.

A detailed audit plan had been drawn up, based on the experience gained from previous audits and risk analyses. The audits detailed in the report (Annex, paragraph 6) were conducted in accordance with the common auditing standards of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations, and covered key areas of WHO's activity. The results and related recommendations were contained in the interim report. In the remaining part of the financial period, the other regional offices

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as resolution WHA60.3.

² Document A60/31.

and some additional country offices would be audited, and management reviews on specific aspects of the functioning of the Organization and a detailed examination of the financial statements of the financial period 2006–2007 would also be undertaken.

In addition, certain trust funds had also been audited: at IARC, the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, the International Computing Centre and UNAIDS, and the findings had been communicated to the bodies concerned through Management Letters.

Interaction with the Secretariat had been constructive and marked by good cooperation and dialogue. There had been regular interaction with the Internal Auditor and, where necessary, the internal audit had been relied upon. The interim report and the recommendations contained therein had been accepted by the Director-General, and assurances had been given that the necessary action would be taken.

He supported WHO's plans to adopt the International Public Sector Accounting Standards. Implementation of the global management system would fully integrate programme management and the Organization's administration and financial system. Work on the framework of delegation of responsibility and authority and the environmental policy should be completed. There were shortcomings in the management of cash and bank accounts in some of the offices audited. Regular cash counts and separate cash checks had not been done in some cases. Bank reconciliation and adjustment of transactions remained outstanding for long periods, and there was a need to close long-dormant bank accounts. Contrary to existing rules, regular payments had also been made from petty cash. Travel claims should be submitted within 30 days of completion of travel. In many cases advances had remained outstanding for long periods of time; it would be necessary to implement an action plan to clear those cases. The Secretariat was aware of the issue and had initiated steps in that regard.

In the area of personnel, it was essential to complete stipulated formalities of employment contracts before commencement of a contract. To that end, closer coordination between country and regional offices was required. In a significant number of cases the appraisal of staff performance, sometimes dating back to 2004, had not been completed. In that regard, he supported the implementation of the performance management and development system software.

Cases of non-adherence to the provisions in WHO's Manual on procurement had been noted. Purchase orders had been split and competitive rates had not been obtained. The vendor database in the country offices should be broadened to enhance the transparency of the procurement process. He further noted instances of incomplete and inaccurately maintained inventory records. Regular physical verification of the inventory should be insisted upon.

The review of WHO's operations under the United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund had assessed internal controls and tested transactions in key areas of financial and project management. In the area of finance it had been seen that, in addition to the stipulated programme support costs and direct and miscellaneous costs, the concerned cluster at WHO headquarters had been retaining additional funds; that needed to be reviewed. There had been obligations where disbursements had far exceeded the obligated amounts. Furthermore, all obligations had to be linked to Activity Management System codes. A significant number of high-value obligations without those codes had been seen. Despite ground-level difficulties in project implementation and procurement activities, several specific areas required attention and had been identified in the report.

The tracking mechanism for external and internal audit recommendations, developed by the Secretariat, had entered into force, strengthening the accountability framework. The implementation of significant recommendations would be noted in the final report on the current financial period. The External Auditor would continue to work towards bringing value to WHO and its stakeholders through the external audit process.

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) endorsed the interim report which clearly identified discrepancies or other problems and offered recommendations for consideration by Member States and the Director-General. He welcomed the inclusion of recommendations made by the Internal Auditor and encouraged development for the final report of a matrix that would summarize the major

recommendations and progress of action taken. He also welcomed the thorough discussion of the interim report at the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee's meeting the previous week,¹ and, in particular, the strong assurances provided by the Director-General at that meeting.

Dr SUWIT WIBULPOLPRASERT (representative of the Executive Board), acknowledging the interim report, drew attention to the long-standing problem of management of the travel claims backlog, which had worsened over the previous 10 years despite having repeatedly featured in the External Auditor's reports. Thousands of travel claims were still waiting to be settled. International foundations, nongovernmental organizations and private industries all reimbursed travel within one month. WHO was encouraging countries to improve their health system performance and increase value for money, but in the case of travel claims the backlog prevented economies. He expected changes under the new Director-General.

Ms BLACKWOOD (United States of America) said that the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee had fully discussed the reports of the External Auditor and Internal Auditor. The latter's report contained several worrying findings that affected WHO at all levels, including cash management and management of contracts. She appreciated the Director-General's commitment to follow up those findings and establish a tracking system. WHO, as an accountable and transparent organization, needed to show that action was being taken.

Mrs PRADHAN (Assistant Director-General) acknowledged the comments. The Secretariat took the External Auditor's recommendations very seriously. A tracking system was in place to ensure that those recommendations were met and that improvements were made. Constant efforts were being undertaken to improve accountability, transparency and effectiveness.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL commended the open discussion at the previous week's meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, which she had attended. She had subsequently met regional directors in order to share the comments made. She reassured Member States that she took audit functions very seriously; they were extremely important management tools and helped WHO to meet its commitments to accountability and transparency. She would continue to work to ensure a satisfactory report on the implementation of the auditors' recommendations.

The Committee noted the report.

Mr Francis took the chair.

Status of collection of assessed contributions, including Member States in arrears in the payment of their contributions to an extent that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution:
Item 15.3 of the Agenda (Documents A60/42 and A60/INF.DOC./6)

Mr JEFFREYS (Comptroller) said that, since the meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee the previous week, a total of US\$ 14.5 million in outstanding assessed contributions had been received. The Dominican Republic, Nauru and Niger had made sufficient payments to have their voting privileges restored. Palau had paid its outstanding assessments in full and therefore was no longer concerned by the draft resolution to be discussed. He asked the Chairman to amend the draft resolution contained in paragraph 9 of document A60/42 by removing the names of those four Member States.

¹ Document A60/45.

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) welcomed the report and supported the emphasis on timely payment of assessed contributions. Canada had always paid in full and on time, and he urged all Member States to honour their obligations in that regard. The sustained improvement in the annual collection rate was gratifying, but he remained concerned about the continuing high level of total outstanding contributions. Late payment or non-payment of assessed contributions denied the Organization the income required to meet the programme objectives of Member States. The Director-General was seeking a 4% increase in the assessed regular budget for 2008–2009, which was about US\$ 36 million, less even than the shortfall in contributions in 2006 alone of US\$ 51 million, which had forced the Director-General to borrow US\$ 22 million from the Working Capital Fund. That illustrated the seriousness of the situation.

Dr SHANGULA (Namibia) expressed concern at the large number of Member States that had not yet paid any part of their assessed contributions, and the fact that more than half the total amount due had not been collected. The Secretariat should actively encourage Member States to pay their contributions. He welcomed the advance payments made by some Member States, but asked how WHO was managing those advance payments. If the amounts were being used earlier than the intended financial year in order to meet an existing shortfall, that would have an impact in later years. He urged Member States to meet their financial obligations so that the mandated activities, requested by Member States, could be carried out. He encouraged improved presentation of the financial data in document A60/INF.DOC./6.

Mr JEFFREYS (Comptroller) said that payments made in time or in advance were welcomed, as that helped the cash flow of the Organization. Efforts were being made to resolve the long-standing arrears of some Members, but those States had been unable to make proposals in time for the current Health Assembly. With regard to the management of advance payments, as reported in the financial statements those totalled US\$ 47 million as at the end of December 2006. Those funds had been invested in accordance with WHO policies and represented part of the cash and investment balances held by the Organization. WHO had a conservative investment policy which was overseen by an investment committee, advised by banking and investment professionals. Interest was earned from those investments, which appeared as miscellaneous income within the Regular Budget.

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the draft resolution, amended in light of the additional information provided by the Comptroller by the removal of the Dominican Republic, Nauru and Niger from the list in the second preambular paragraph and the words “and Palau” from paragraphs 1 and 2.

Mr VAN DER HOEVEN (Netherlands) said that the words “and Palau” should also be removed from the third preambular paragraph.

The draft resolution as amended was approved.¹

Scale of assessments 2008–2009: Item 15.5 of the Agenda (Document EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R18)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolution recommended by the Executive Board in resolution EB120.R18.

Dr SUWIT WIBULPOLPRASERT (representative of the Executive Board) said that at its 120th session in January 2007 the Board had considered the proposed scale of assessments for the

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s first report and adopted as resolution WHA60.4.

period 2008–2009 and had agreed to recommend a new scale of assessments based on the latest United Nations scale of assessments approved by the General Assembly on 21 December 2006 by resolution 61/237.

The draft resolution was approved.¹

Assessment of new Members and Associate Members: Item 15.6 of the Agenda (Document A60/44)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolution on the assessment of the Republic of Montenegro contained in the report.

The draft resolution was approved.²

Financial period 2006–2007: implementation of resolution WHA58.4: Item 15.8 of the Agenda (Documents A60/43, A60/43 Add.1, A60/46 and A60/46 Add.1)

The CHAIRMAN reported that the item had been discussed the previous week by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, whose report was contained in document A60/46 along with a draft resolution.

Ms BLACKWOOD (United States of America) said that document containing the proposal had been received only shortly before the convening of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, at which the United States had expressed a concern, relating not to the global management system, which the United States supported as an important endeavour, but to the lack of information provided, the lateness of the submission, and the fact that the impact of the proposal would be to set a level of appropriation higher than that which had been approved for the period 2006–2007. Consequently, the United States of America had dissociated itself from the draft resolution contained in the Committee's report.

The CHAIRMAN said that her comments would be noted.

The draft resolution was approved.³

Amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules: Item 15.9 of the Agenda

- **Introduction of International Public Sector Accounting Standards:** (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R9, and A60/33)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolution recommended by the Executive Board in resolution EB120.R9.

Dr SUWIT WIBULPOLPRASERT (representative of the Executive Board) said that the Board had considered the proposed amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules at its 120th session in January 2007. It had noted that the International Public Sector Accounting Standards

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as resolution WHA60.5.

² Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as resolution WHA60.6.

³ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as resolution WHA60.8.

would be introduced progressively, starting in 2008. Their main advantage would be to match the recording of expenditures better with the recording of the corresponding results achieved.

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) fully supported the introduction of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards at WHO, and across the United Nations system. Canada was pleased that the new electronic tracking systems being put in place would enable WHO to meet the requisite reporting standard well ahead of the deadline of 2010. It was regrettable that the financial incentive scheme had not had the intended effect of increasing the prompt payment of assessed contributions by Member States, and he agreed with the proposal that the scheme should be discontinued.

The draft resolution was approved.¹

3. REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR: Item 16 of the Agenda (Documents A60/34 and A60/47)

The CHAIRMAN said that the report had been reviewed the previous week by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, whose report to the Health Assembly was contained in document A60/47.

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) welcomed the Internal Auditor's report and its thorough discussion by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee. In future reports the tracking chart should contain more detail on progress in shortening the list of outstanding items reported by the Internal Auditor. A short summary of such progress should be given, and he welcomed the assurances given by the Director-General in that regard at the meeting the previous week.

Mr VAN DER HOEVEN (Netherlands) welcomed the scope of the clear and informative report and appreciated the prompt access provided to all relevant sources of information. WHO's management should make use of the findings of the Internal Auditor, but he noted that of the eight audits conducted in 2006 only one had received an initial response.

The Regional Office for Africa had received critical audit reports in 2003, 2004 and 2005. The appointment of a new Regional Director had raised hopes for improvement, but the latest report concluded that "the situation in the budget and finance unit will continue to be weak in terms of the capability to monitor and address effectively significant risks". As the African Region received a high share of WHO's budget and Africa was a major focus of Dutch voluntary contributions the critical situation described should be reflected in the distribution of the budget to and through the Regional Office for Africa.

Mr KOCHETKOV (Russian Federation) echoed the concerns of the previous speaker about the Regional Office for Africa. In particular, he was disturbed that staffing levels in the budget and finance area were only at 55% of requirements.

Mr LANGFORD (Office of Internal Oversight Services) said that efforts would be made in future reports to provide more detail as requested by the delegate of Canada. With regard to the Regional Office for Africa, his Office continued to work with the Regional Director and other staff both in the Regional Office and at headquarters to resolve the problems identified. Given the size and importance of the African Region, that focus would continue until acceptable solutions had been found.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as resolution WHA60.9.

Dr SAMBO (Regional Director for Africa) acknowledged the concerns expressed. Internal and external audits were important in improving management of WHO in general. The Regional Office was fully committed to improving the management of resources and had been working with the Director-General and senior management at headquarters and in country offices.

The Regional Office's first major internal difficulty had resulted from operating in Harare and Brazzaville until the end of 2006. Civil strife in Congo in 1997 had originally obliged the Office to move to Zimbabwe. Even when the Office had returned, a portion of it had had to remain behind, mainly because of a lack of office space in Brazzaville. With the entire Office back in Brazzaville, there was still a need for reorganization, taking into account both the recommendations from audit reports and the Office's own needs. The second internal problem concerned a shortage of skilled staff in financial management, both accountants and others. Improvements were already in hand, and thus in that area the report was not up to date. Recruitment of international professional staff had been concluded, and the budget and financial area had been reorganized.

Difficult banking conditions in some areas or countries hampered operations. The Regional Office had to adjust to an environment that was sometimes beyond its control. At the same time, all necessary measures to prevent problems, particularly fraud, were being taken. The Office was actively monitoring for possible fraud. Suspicious practices were reported to headquarters and an audit was undertaken. The Office should not be penalized for being proactive and thereby detecting a greater number of cases of fraud. There was no cause for alarm, as the monetary amounts involved were minor. The Office was committed to reporting an improved situation the following year.

In terms of governance, as of the current year the Regional Office was benefiting from the oversight role of the Regional Committee for Africa, within which ministers of health also gave consideration to financial and audit matters.

At present all audit matters had to be referred to headquarters. There might be advantages in decentralizing some audit functions to the regional level.

Mrs PRADHAN (Assistant Director-General) confirmed that WHO headquarters was working closely with the Regional Director and his staff on improving internal controls, systems and human resources. The administration took internal audit recommendations as seriously as external ones. The tracking mechanisms in place were being monitored closely.

Dr AL-MUBARAK (Kuwait) said that the meeting had not heard anything that suggested that any correction was taking place. The situation at the Regional Office for Africa was an emergency, out of control, and she called on the Director-General to take all necessary strict measures to close the gaps in its financial control.

The CHAIRMAN said that the comments of the delegate of Kuwait would be noted.

Dr SHANGULA (Namibia) considered that the relevant paragraph in the report of the Internal Auditor was written in such a way as to cast suspicion on the financial operations at the Regional Office. In the absence of the Regional Director's oral explanation that the situation was not alarming, a reader would have concluded that all was not well. Reports of that nature should not be couched in generalized terms likely to cast aspersions on an office's whole operation, but rather should make specific and accurate statements that did not leave scope for erroneous conclusions. Future audit reports should improve in that regard.

The Committee noted the report of the Internal Auditor.

The meeting rose at 12:10.

THIRD MEETING

Thursday, 17 May 2007, at 14:30

Chairman: Mr T. ZELTNER (Switzerland)

later: Dr A.A.YOOSUF (Maldives)

1. FINANCIAL MATTERS: Item 15 of the Agenda (continued)

Appointment of the External Auditor: Item 15.7 of the Agenda (Documents A60/32 and A60/32 Corr.1)

The CHAIRMAN said that the Health Assembly would consider candidates nominated by India, Indonesia and the Philippines for the position of External Auditor and invited the candidates to make their personal presentations to the Committee.

Mr KAUL (External Auditor), recalling that he had been appointed for the financial periods 2004–2005 and 2006–2007 pursuant to resolution WHA56.8, said that his organization, the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, had gained considerable insight into the functioning of WHO during the course of work carried out in accordance with the Common Auditing Standards of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations, and the auditing standards of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions. He had served on the United Nations Board of Auditors from 1993 to 1999 and he was currently external auditor of other specialized agencies of the United Nations besides WHO, Chairman of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions' Standing Committee on IT Audit and Secretary-General of the Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions. His team had experience in auditing large and complex health and social sector programmes. Should he be re-elected, his team would remain in place at headquarters and in the field, undertake 85 auditor work months per biennium, and assist WHO in its impending transition to the International Public Sector Accounting Standards.

Dr NASUTION (Indonesia), Chairman, Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia, briefly outlined his personal career from 1996, when he had spent a year as Distinguished Sasakawa Chair in Development Economics at United Nations University/World Institute for Development Economics Research in Helsinki, through his time as economic adviser to the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and IMF, his Deputy Governorship of the Central Bank of Indonesia, where he had supervised the auditing of commercial banks in his country, to his current posts, including Vice-Chairman of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions' Task Force on Accountability and Audit of Disaster-related Aid.

The main reasons in favour of his candidature were an in-depth grasp of WHO's programmes; cooperation with other supreme audit institutions on the financial implementation of avian influenza assistance programmes; a staff of nearly 4000 auditors, with world-class experience in auditing international organizations, especially in conflict areas such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea and Kosovo; and a mandate to audit central, provincial and city levels of government in Indonesia as well as the central bank and more than 200 state-owned enterprises.

Mr ESPINO (Philippines) said that the Commission on Audit of the Philippines, of which he was Commissioner, was an independent body, the supreme audit institution of the Philippines, which undertook an annual audit of all government agencies and audits of government-wide and sectoral

performance, value-for-money and fraud. From 1984 to 1993 and from 1999 to the present, it had contributed as a United Nations External Auditor. It had been auditing the nationally executed UNDP projects in the Philippines for 14 years. It was active on the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations, specialized agencies of the United Nations system and IAEA, the international and Asian organizations of supreme audit institutions, and the International Consortium on Governmental Financial Management. It provided training to auditors from other supreme audit institutions and was recognized as a major audit learning centre in Asia. Auditors assigned to the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes were drawn from a pool of about 200 highly qualified and experienced auditors. Because of its long experience auditing United Nations financial programmes, the Commission offered the shortest work-hours and the lowest-cost audit.

In the absence of any further comment, the CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee wished to conduct a vote in order to elect the External Auditor.

It was so agreed.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in order to save time, the Committee should use ballot papers on which the names of the countries presenting candidates were already printed in alphabetical order; two ushers, accompanied by members of the Secretariat, could pass in front of each delegation for them to deposit their ballot in the ballot box; and, rather than lots being drawn to decide the name of the first Member State to vote, the ballot box should simply be passed back from row to row, starting at the front.

It was so agreed.

Mrs Knutsdottir (Iceland) and Dr Shangula (Namibia) were appointed as tellers.

Mr BURCI (Legal Counsel) said that those Member States whose voting rights had been suspended or that were not represented at the current Health Assembly were Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Central African Republic, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Fiji, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Kyrgyzstan, Niue, Saint Lucia and Somalia.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 15:45 and resumed at 16:10.

The result of the secret ballot was as follows:

Members entitled to vote	180
Members absent	55
Abstentions	1
Papers null and void	0
Members present and voting	124
India	80
Indonesia	26
Philippines	18
Number required for a simple majority	63

Having obtained the required majority, the Indian candidate for the position of External Auditor was elected.

The draft resolution contained in paragraph 5 of document A60/32, completed in accordance with the result of the secret ballot, was approved.¹

2. STAFFING MATTERS: Item 17 of the Agenda

Human resources: annual report: Item 17.1 of the Agenda (Document A60/35)

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) welcomed the eighth annual report and the constructive efforts to recruit qualified staff from underrepresented or unrepresented Member States, pursuant to resolution WHA56.35. Member States themselves, particularly those that were not underrepresented or unrepresented, should actively assist WHO's recruitment efforts.

Dr SOMBIE (Burkina Faso) commended progress towards gender parity, although much remained to be done. He requested the Secretariat, in its next report, to indicate whether priority was being given to temporary or to long-term contracts, and whether the main beneficiaries of long-term contracts would continue to be temporary staff, as had been the case in 2006.

Mr KOCHETKOV (Russian Federation) asked about progress on the mobility policy. He was also concerned about the apparent lack of human resources in the Regional Office for Europe, resulting in some plans not being implemented. Furthermore, what was the implementation status of Minimum Operating Security Standards, with respect to staff training and preparation to work in difficult or hazardous conditions?

Ms USIKU (Namibia) commended the progress made by WHO in the appointment of women in the professional and higher categories, to 36.4%, and asked whether the target was 50% or 70%.

Ms BLACKWOOD (United States of America) expressed concern about the decrease in the overall appointments of women, from 43.5% to 39.7%. She stressed the need to resolve the issue of unrepresented, underrepresented and overrepresented countries and asked what steps were being taken by the Secretariat in view of the high percentage of projected retirements in the next 10 years.

Mr HENNING (Human Resources Management) took note of the request for details of trends in the different types of contracts, particularly since the new contract reform process would be initiated on 1 July 2007. Regarding the questions raised by the delegate of the Russian Federation, a pilot project on mobility in the general management occupational group was scheduled to start in 2008. Concerning the Regional Office for Europe, the new human resource planning processes had been reviewed and the resulting plan would be implemented in 2008, in accordance also with the new standards of contract reform. Staff assigned to difficult duty stations worldwide usually received induction, at headquarters and in the regional office concerned, with safety and security training. The recruitment strategy targeted 50% representation of women in the professional and higher categories, though no specific date had been set for achieving that goal. Although the number of women recruited in 2006 had decreased, the percentage of women employed had increased. Recruitment targets specified in the document submitted to the Executive Board had been endorsed. Projected retirements would be dealt with under plans for the forthcoming biennium. The global management system would require a detailed action plan, as part of the normal human resource planning process at WHO.

The Committee noted the report.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as resolution WHA60.7.

Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules: Item 17.2 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R11, A60/36 and A60/36 Corr.1)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a correction to the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R11. As a result of a change in the applicable salary scale, the salary of the Deputy Director-General for 2006 should read: “US\$ 176 877 per annum before staff assessment, resulting in a net salary of US\$ 127 970 (dependency rate) or US\$ 115 166 (single rate)”.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Report of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board: Item 17.3 of the Agenda (Document A60/37)

The Committee noted the report.

Appointment of representatives to the WHO Staff Pension Committee: Item 17.4 of the Agenda (Document A60/38 Rev.1)

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to appoint one member and one alternate member to the WHO Staff Pension Committee, in accordance with the rotational schedule explained in the report.

Decision: The Sixtieth World Health Assembly nominated Dr J. Larivière of the delegation of Canada as a member and Dr A.A. Yoosuf of the delegation of the Maldives as an alternate member of the WHO Staff Pension Committee for a three-year term until May 2010.²

Dr Yoosuf took the Chair.

3. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (transferred from Committee A)³

WHO's role and responsibilities in health research: Item 12.16 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R15, and A60/23)

Dr SADASIVAN (representative of the Executive Board) explained that the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly had highlighted the fundamental importance of health research and had urged WHO to allocate more funds to that area; but it referred the matter to the Executive Board for consideration at its session in January 2007. At that session, the Board had adopted an amended resolution requesting the Director-General to promote and strengthen research advocacy, capacity, technical support and partnerships at all levels and through action by key stakeholders.

Ms YOUBA (Mali), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that the 2008 Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health would be held in Bamako from 17 to 20 November 2008. The African Member States had drawn up a strategic framework for research activities and aimed to encourage a culture of health research. WHO's primary responsibility was to lead by example; in collaboration with stakeholders, it should build capacity for health research.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as resolution WHA60.10.

² Decision WHA60(9).

³ See summary record of the first meeting of the General Committee, section 3.

At least 5% of development aid to health should be devoted to research and strengthening research capacity. Member States in the African Region needed to allocate 2% of the health budget to research, implement national health research policies, including health systems research, use research results in political decision-making and integrate them into national health plans and programmes, and strengthen national committees and ethics bodies reviewing health research projects.

She supported the draft resolution as amended; a new final preambular paragraph should be added recognizing the need to assess progress since 2004 in health research and to discuss the future requirements of all Member States with regard to strengthening health research and health policies from an evidence-based perspective; and in paragraph 3 a new subparagraph (18) should be added requesting the Director-General to convene a ministerial-level conference on research for health, open to all Member States, to be held in Bamako, in November 2008.

Dr UGRID MILINTANGKUL (Thailand) welcomed the draft resolution. Health research was crucial to improving the health of populations and improving equity, efficiency and sustainability of national and international health systems. Health research should also bring social justice.

Thailand would establish through legislation an institute to support and promote health at the national level. A knowledge management institute already fostered independent exchange of knowledge among parties involved in the field.

He supported the draft resolution and asked the Director-General to introduce management and sharing of information from research activities within WHO and from research at the country level.

Dr MAZHANI (Botswana) said that, given the challenges to health systems of African Member States in the form of emerging and re-emerging diseases, the brain drain and financial constraints, research was essential in order to develop and evaluate interventions, guide policies and strengthen health systems.

WHO's commitment to building sustainable capacity for health research in Member States was crucial, especially as some health systems were still young and in need of support. Some requests to Member States contained in the draft resolution were already being implemented in Botswana. The recent first round of national health accounts had made it possible to monitor health expenditure, including spending on health research. In order for research findings to be disseminated and used in decision-making, Member States should strengthen communication for stakeholders, especially communities.

Health research was needed, but countries must possess sufficient infrastructure to allow proposed health research to be scientifically and ethically appraised. He endorsed the emphasis on strengthening national and institutional ethics committees, health research policies and legislative documents. It was also essential to make communities aware of their rights and responsibilities as study participants in order to protect people from unethical research. He welcomed the role assigned in the draft resolution to the Director-General, who should also provide support for the drawing up of communication strategies and to sensitize communities to those rights and responsibilities. Noting that the comments made by Member States at the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly had been taken into account in the text, he supported the draft resolution.

Ms BLACKWOOD (United States of America) said that the generation of knowledge must be carefully protected and nurtured. High-quality health research required transparency, independent peer review, sustainable investment, and a strategy able to translate that knowledge into policy, minimize health inequalities and improve health, well-being and quality of life.

She supported investigator-initiated research. Basic, clinical and translational health research and investigation of the causes, prevention, and treatment of disease relied on the initiative of scientists, in partnership with sponsors and policy-makers. Increased investment by research institutions was opening new fields and accelerating advances across the spectrum of the biomedical and behavioural sciences. Her Government was the world's largest investor in biomedical, public health and behavioural research and development. Much biomedical and behavioural research was driven by the private sector. Research in the United States was built on public-private partnerships.

Partnerships with all relevant stakeholders were crucial to expanding scientific infrastructure and facing the growing scope and complexity of scientific challenges.

In the context of developing nations, she recognized the need for greater investment in research in order to scale up proven interventions. WHO should lead by example through programmes and recommendations based on the best research available.

WHO should support innovative research and stimulate transforming strategies that could benefit the entire scientific community. She supported the draft resolution.

Mr WU Peixin (China) said that WHO had played an important role in pharmaceutical and health research and in enhancing the research capabilities of developing countries. WHO should shoulder greater responsibilities in health research, which was crucial in improving health systems and in the prevention and control of diseases. Its outcomes served as the scientific basis for health policy-making. The health research capabilities of developing countries lagged far behind those of developed countries. He agreed in principle with the draft resolution. The Secretariat should strengthen coordination of its research activities and establish information networks for research outcomes to be more widely applied. The Secretariat should support collaborating centres in developing countries and provide more technical support to Member States, especially developing countries, in the training of research managers. It should also build those countries' capabilities to assess applied health technologies so as to facilitate research and policy-making. An appropriate mechanism should be set up and funding provided within WHO's research activities.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the fourth meeting, section 3.)

The meeting rose at 16:55.

FOURTH MEETING

Friday, 18 May 2007, at 09:50

Chairman: Mr T. ZELTNER (Switzerland)

later: Dr A.A. YOOSUF (Maldives)

later: Mr T. ZELTNER (Switzerland)

1. FIRST REPORT OF COMMITTEE B (Document A60/55)

Mr AL-FAKHERI (Saudi Arabia), Rapporteur, read out the draft first report of Committee B.

Ms BLACKWOOD (United States of America) asked that it be placed on record that the resolution relating to agenda item 14 contained in that report had been approved by a vote.

Dr SUWIT WIBULPOLPRASERT (Thailand), supporting that proposal, said that the voting numbers and the adoption without a vote of all the other resolutions mentioned in the report should also be recorded.

The report, as amended, was adopted on the understanding that it would be transmitted to the Health Assembly in plenary with the voting information requested.¹

2. COLLABORATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND WITH OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: Item 18 of the Agenda (Documents A60/39 and A60/39 Add.1)

Dr SUWIT WIBULPOLPRASERT (representative of the Executive Board) said that WHO and reform of the United Nations system had been discussed by the Board at its 120th session.² Board members had welcomed the Secretariat's report. The Director-General had reaffirmed that WHO would be an active partner in the reform process and that the Secretariat would submit regular reports to the governing bodies on the issue.

Mr STRØMMEN (Norway) strongly supported the report of the High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment, "Delivering as One", and looked forward to a process for timely follow-up to its recommendations. Their implementation would strengthen the United Nations and make it more effective in supporting country needs. He welcomed the Director-General's assurance that WHO would participate fully in all eight pilot schemes under the One UN Country Programme. WHO should contribute actively to coordination in the United Nations system at regional and headquarters levels. All United Nations entities needed to be reconfigured to provide common regional hubs that could

¹ See page 312.

² Document EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/2, summary record of the thirteenth meeting, section 1.

service the United Nations country teams. The United Nations had to modernize and achieve full compatibility in resource planning, human resources, common services and evaluation in order to promote coherence and efficiency within the system. The performance and the accountability of the United Nations needed to be improved. His Government therefore pledged US\$ 25 million in resources to fund the pilot schemes in 2007, in addition to the funds it had already committed to the United Nations and the countries involved in the Programme.

Mr GREEN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) commended WHO's efforts since January 2007 to engage in the United Nations reform process, particularly the eight pilot schemes, and to provide effective support at headquarters for the WHO teams working in the countries concerned. Reform should make the United Nations system more effective and efficient, thus improving support for countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals; it should also raise the confidence of the system's largest contributors of funding.

Further information should be provided on the recent engagement between WHO and the World Bank, and on other elements of United Nations harmonization. The forthcoming Global Task Team's review must guide WHO's participation in, and work on, United Nations reform in the pilot countries. Action was also required to meet the targets for 2010 set in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The proposals of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence represented an opportunity for the United Nations to improve its performance. He recognized the importance of the Resident Coordinator's role and the value of sufficient separation by UNDP of the management of the Resident Coordinator system from that of other activities. Effective monitoring and evaluation of the pilot process were important.

Mr BIELER (Switzerland) underlined the importance of WHO's work to improve and consolidate its collaboration with its partners at country level. The high-level leadership and understanding of the challenges shown by the Director-General and the Executive Director of UNFPA needed to be translated into concrete action. Vertical initiatives in the health field were on the increase and the commitment to change the scale of health investment in countries with limited resources was producing results. In order to implement its Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 and fulfil the role entrusted to it, WHO must provide global leadership in health; it could only do so by collaborating closely with all the other partners at country level. WHO should take full advantage of the opportunity presented by the "Delivering as One" approach in the chosen pilot countries.

Despite the difficulties for WHO and other specialized agencies of integration into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the latter's revised guidelines would facilitate that process. The challenge lay in making the system more flexible while maintaining the strategic link between the United Nations country teams and governments. The Framework would result in joint programmes and so maximize the comparative advantages of each partner. WHO should encourage all those working for the Organization to engage in the pilot process, thereby enabling WHO country representatives, their partners and country teams to be fully integrated. The integration of WHO activities in the Framework's activities would not hinder initiatives and partnerships outside the United Nations system. WHO should identify any obstacles to its engagement at country level, modify its procedures and the approach of its staff and seize the opportunity to strengthen its role in health at country level. He requested information on the progress of engagement in countries piloting the programme and the outlook for future Frameworks in those countries.

Mr FU Cong (China) supported United Nations reform but wished to see a gradual process, based on careful study. He therefore supported the pilot schemes. While promoting better coordination of country programmes with other public health programmes, WHO should maintain its independence vis-à-vis other United Nations entities and avoid political considerations when drawing up its programmes. The reform process aimed to enhance the efficiency of the United Nations system, but it needed to avoid creating additional bureaucracy within the United Nations, particularly within country programmes.

Mr VAN DER HOEVEN (Netherlands) welcomed WHO's positive response to the pilot programmes but sought clarification of WHO's role in the programme in Viet Nam, as he had learnt that the Organization was involved in only one aspect of it.

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) also appreciated WHO's major role in the areas covered by the report. He had noted the reforms introduced in the field of humanitarian assistance, but agreed with the focus on activities that added most value for Member States, and welcomed WHO's collaboration within the United Nations system in increasing cost-effectiveness. The harmonization of business practices and the introduction of common accounting systems and cost sharing were particularly noteworthy. Canada supported WHO's efforts to facilitate the collection of data on gender mainstreaming and to make improvements in procurement. He also welcomed WHO's continued leadership in areas where it could add value in the field of health.

Ms BLACKWOOD (United States of America) said that reform was essential if the United Nations was to live up to its ideals and core purposes and remain relevant. WHO had taken a leading role in promoting a better system-wide understanding of the need for results-based management. Its participation in improving system-wide coherence was also important to its own internal operations. The "Delivering as One" report contained useful recommendations on the restructuring of United Nations operations, and the country pilot programmes had provided information of broader application. She urged WHO to participate fully in the One UN Country Programme and engage with partners in the United Nations system and beyond in order to eliminate duplication and competition and to identify reforms that would improve service delivery.

Dr ALA (Philippines) fully supported WHO's participation in the United Nations harmonization process. Although the Philippines was not one of the pilot countries, it had drawn up a health sector programme and a clear implementation strategy, using them to map out areas where support was needed and avoid duplication of development partners' efforts.

Mr A.P. SINGH (India) said that his country was closely watching the One United Nations approach at country level. He appreciated the need for greater harmonization of the work of the United Nations, but had concerns about the process. No country from the South-East Asia Region had been chosen as a pilot country; the situation in that Region would not be tested. There was a danger that health would lose its primacy as a result of the proposed One United Nations initiative. Care also needed to be taken to ensure that the specialized nature of WHO was preserved. In addition, the organizational structure of the proposed system at regional level had to be defined since the pilot schemes were restricted to country level.

Mr DE PRETER (Belgium) agreed with the comments of previous speakers and supported the "Delivering as One" project. He highlighted the importance for the Organization and the system as a whole of thoroughly analysing the situation on the ground, covering both negative and positive aspects, and the harmonization of management practices. Alignment of information, communication technology and other systems, such as the International Public Sector Accounting Standards, would also improve the One United Nations approach.

Dr MANSOOR (Iraq) welcomed WHO efforts, but emphasized coordination with the other United Nations entities about the thrust of the programmes in order to avoid duplication and improve response. Decentralization and greater decision-making power for country offices were also needed for cost-effective programme implementation. However, the support of other United Nations entities was required.

Mr DELVALLEE (France) endorsed system-wide collaboration as essential to improving efficiency. Many speakers had emphasized reforms at national and global levels, but regional reform was also important for some health issues. He regretted that the regional level had been neglected in

the report of the High-level Panel, and discussions during the meetings in October 2006 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council had confirmed the confusion surrounding that issue. Given the importance of programme and financial decentralization being implemented by WHO, he requested more information about WHO's policy on regional reforms, which had not been covered in detail in the report.

Dr MOOSA (Maldives) welcomed WHO's efforts to harmonize management and administration with the United Nations system. However, she shared the concern that the pilot projects did not cover all geographical regions, and emphasized that WHO should continue to focus on health-related issues. She asked the Secretariat to share both the positive and the negative experience gained from the pilot projects with all Member States.

Mr VAN DER HOEVEN (Netherlands) explained that he had not suggested that WHO should participate in all the pilot projects, but had merely requested clarification on WHO's participation in the Viet Nam project.

Mr HERNÁNDEZ FLEITAS (Cuba), observing that the report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence had yet to be debated at the United Nations General Assembly, urged WHO to await the results of that debate and draw the necessary conclusions.

Ms MAZZANTI (International Atomic Energy Agency) said that through the Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy the Agency had contributed to the implementation of resolution WHA58.22 on cancer prevention and control, and looked forward to further supporting WHO's efforts to promote global action against noncommunicable diseases. The Programme encouraged Member States and policy-makers to pay more attention to the emerging cancer epidemic, in order to raise awareness and funding for capacity building and technical assistance. It was working with the Secretariat, including IARC, and other stakeholders. Its goal was to produce a global strategy for the prevention and control of cancer, and to contribute to WHO's fight against noncommunicable diseases. IAEA was also actively supporting programmes against communicable diseases. During 2006, rising concerns over avian influenza had led a joint FAO/IAEA programme to coordinate support for Member States in dealing with that virus. The IAEA Nobel Peace Prize Fund schools for nutrition had been held in Bangladesh, Guatemala, Uganda and other countries in Africa and Latin America, and special events on human resources development in radiation oncology in the context of cancer control programmes had been held in Cape Town (South Africa), Bangkok and Buenos Aires.

Mr AITKEN (Representative of the Director-General) reconfirmed WHO's commitment to United Nations reform and the eight pilot projects, as well as to ensuring that health remained the primary concern of WHO's daily work. In response to the delegate of the United Kingdom, he said that the focus of the engagement with the World Bank had recently been on health systems and that cooperation in advising governments on health systems had been reviewed at the first high-level joint meeting earlier that month.

In response to the question from the delegate of Switzerland, he said that WHO was working on the health dimension within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, by incorporating WHO's country cooperation strategies into that Framework along with other United Nations system health programmes in countries.

With regard to the question raised by the delegate of the Netherlands, he said that coordination between UNDP, UNICEF, WFP and UNFPA in Viet Nam had begun before the start of the pilot scheme. Other agencies were preparing to join the system of coordination, and in the context of the pilot scheme WHO was working on joint office and business practices, and on fostering a sectoral approach to health.

With reference to the concerns raised by the delegates of India and Maldives, he said that although none of the eight pilot programmes was being carried out in the South-East Asia Region, the

regional and country offices in that Region were being kept informed of developments as a subsequent phase would undoubtedly include some countries in that Region.

He agreed with the delegate of France that the regional dimension of the reform process had been neglected. WHO was participating in new mechanisms, such as regional directors' meetings and interregional cooperation, to ensure that country-led development would also involve regional coordination.

He also agreed with the delegate of Cuba that some intergovernmental processes had not yet been completed, including the triennial comprehensive policy review and other forums.

WHO would share information on progress in the pilot programmes and the United Nations reform in general with all Member States, as requested by Maldives.

The CHAIRMAN said that he took it that the Committee wished to take note of the reports in documents A60/39 and A60/39 Add.1.

The Committee noted the reports.

- **Joint report of the Director-General and the President of the International Narcotics Control Board** (Document A60/INF.DOC./2)

The Committee noted the report.

Dr Yoosuf took the Chair.

3. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

WHO's role and responsibilities in health research: Item 12.16 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R15 and A60/23) (continued from the third meeting, section 3)

Dr ALA (Philippines) supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R15 but proposed amending the operative part to provide for the establishment of systems and mechanisms for greater interaction and convergence among researchers and research users in order to improve the use of research results and enhance the development of health policies. The Philippine National Health Research System was one such mechanism: a network of institutions conducting health research and government agencies involved in policy and programme development. The interaction and convergence of Member States' efforts had made the use of resources for research more efficient and had led to improvements in the use of research in policy development and health programme implementation.

Ms BINLER (Turkey), supporting the draft resolution, recognized that health research was important for achieving internationally agreed health-related development goals, improving health systems and attaining equality in health. One of WHO's primary responsibilities was to provide more efficient support to developing countries to maximize health research, and thereby to develop health systems. WHO's research should be relevant to the needs of health-service users, especially neglected populations. WHO addressed potentially controversial and neglected research issues, in disseminating results to policy-makers, civil society institutions and the general public, and in building public support for health research. WHO should also strengthen its own policies for the integration of research into national programmes, as well as encouraging networks for research, particularly on health systems, disease burden and emerging health-related issues.

Mr DEL PICÓ (Chile) supported WHO's efforts to encourage health policies based on the best available scientific information, which helped to establish local legal priorities for the generation of information and for investment in essential research. He supported the draft resolution, assuming that the 2% goal mentioned in paragraph 1(1) was to be achieved gradually, taking into account the situation in each Member State.

Dr LEE Kang-hee (Republic of Korea) recognized the key role of health research in promoting public health. He supported the draft resolution and agreed that one of WHO's major responsibilities was to encourage ethically sound research. WHO should use the results of such research for disease prevention and control, better health-care systems and equality in the health-care sector. It should broaden the scope of its activities in such areas as the application of research results, including the dissemination of research guidelines, encouraging access to harmonized information and establishing standard methodologies in various research fields, such as ethics, peer review, prioritization and relevance assessment. He urged the Director-General and Member States to continue to strive for high-quality health care and improved public health. His Government had increased its investment in research and in strengthening international cooperation.

Ms IMAI (Japan), noting the importance both of health research for strengthening health systems and of establishing and implementing health policies based on appropriate scientific evidence, supported the draft resolution. She appreciated WHO's activities for research, particularly in the area of tropical diseases. The important work of IARC and the WHO Centre for Health Development should be strengthened. Networks of WHO collaborating centres should be used. WHO should continue to take the lead in health research, including providing support for capacity building.

Mr ONGOLO ZOGO (Cameroon) supported the draft resolution, which was an improvement on the text submitted to the previous Health Assembly. He commended the activities carried out in the African Region. Many African countries had been involved in the Health Metrics and Evidence-informed Policy networks, which had improved awareness and pioneered solutions for evidence-related needs. The UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases and the Regional Office for Africa had supported high-level ministerial meetings in Abuja and Accra, which had articulated an African position on health research relating to diseases of poverty. Some of the priorities outlined in the final communiqué of those meetings had been incorporated in the Special Programme's recently adopted strategy. More countries should support their implementation.

Africa needed to increase awareness of and investment in health research in order to sustain health and development in the region. Despite the recommendations of the Commission on Health Research for Development, few African countries would be able to allocate 2% of their national budgets to research and even fewer countries had persuaded donors to invest 5% of their existing assistance contributions in research. Countries should be encouraged to integrate national health research into national health systems. He called on the Secretariat to increase its efforts to support sub-Saharan countries in upgrading national health research systems.

Ms HALÉN (Sweden), supporting the draft resolution, said that research was essential to better health and health systems. National research provided the tools for analysing and solving problems; incorporating results into health services; participating in global research; and setting health and research priorities. Building research capacity in developing countries improved national and regional health, but it required support for individual researchers, a strong academic environment, functioning research management and a research system. The Secretariat should advise Member States on building health research systems where required, and devise resource-tracking tools. Member States should do the monitoring, and the Secretariat should coordinate and compile the data.

In 2006, the Nordic countries had requested the Director-General to submit to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly a strategy on the management and organization of health research within

WHO. The strategy should focus on organizational aspects such as mechanisms for managing and prioritizing research activities, and should clarify WHO's role in global health research.

Mr DELVALLEE (France) fully supported the draft resolution and emphasized that its title included both the role and the responsibilities of WHO in research. France would continue to support WHO in facilitating the health research needed for the best possible health care. Paragraph 3(7) seemed to require the Director-General to review all research proposals worldwide, which was both ambiguous and impossible. He therefore proposed that the second line of that paragraph should be amended to read: "including registration of its research proposals".

He welcomed the focus of the draft resolution on ethics. WHO was also responsible for ensuring coherence and integration of its activities, both at headquarters and between headquarters and regional and country offices, as had been discussed in regard to the draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013. One example of such internal coherence was the cancer action plan, to be launched the following week, which brought together three departments and IARC. Activities should be integrated and duplication avoided. At the meeting of the Governing Council of IARC the previous week, France had also advocated more visible integration of IARC within WHO. Such integration would ensure better use of WHO's resources worldwide.

The meeting was suspended at 11:00 and resumed at 11:35.

Dr ASLANYAN (Canada) said that Canada had initiated a WHO-Canada Dialogue on Global Health Research (Ottawa, 2–4 November 2005). The first workshop had explored the role of developed countries in contributing to the Mexico Statement on Health Research of 2004. The dialogue had proved fruitful and had resulted in suggestions on how Canada and WHO could facilitate collaboration on health research between developed and developing countries.

Canada welcomed WHO's efforts to enhance its culture of research, inter alia by building up a reporting system on its activities in health research, and supported the resolution.

Dr AL-SAIF (Kuwait) said that health research was important for strengthening health services at all levels, including care and prophylaxis. Countries needed to spend more on health research. Health research demanded full respect for ethics and the principle of following scientific evidence. Studies were being conducted on those issues at the Kuwaiti Research Institute and within the Ministry of Health. Kuwait attached importance to health research and appropriate budgetary allocations, and supported the draft resolution.

Dr BUDIARDJA (Indonesia) said that Indonesia's health policy was to improve the health of the population by providing health services of a common standard to all citizens, minimizing knowledge gaps, strengthening health systems and using research findings and data from health information systems to guide health policy.

He supported the WHO-cosponsored research programme into tuberculosis, malaria and AIDS, and recognized the contribution to strengthening research capacity in Member States. He therefore fully supported the draft resolution.

He stressed, however, that research activities across the entire spectrum of health, medicine and behaviour should be directed, as a matter of priority, to enhancing the performance of the existing health system.

Mr ADLIDE (Australia) endorsed the preambular statement in the draft resolution that WHO should lead by example in the use of research findings to inform decisions about health. Australia was committed to increasing support for health research within its development assistance programme. However, setting targets for research expenditure within aid programmes was problematic, partly because decisions about aid expenditure were made jointly with aid partners whose needs differed.

Mr MÄUSEZAHN (Switzerland) said that adoption of the resolution would be the culmination of a three-year process and the inception of a strong WHO strategy in health research. He concurred with the Nordic statement that the strategy should clarify the organization and management structure of all health research activities within WHO, as well as developing a strong vision of its role in health research. Switzerland had repeatedly stressed that such a process should be inclusive, involving all stakeholders in health research. During the 120th session of the Executive Board in January 2007, it had been announced that an expert advisory group would be convened;¹ he sought further information on its composition, working methods and timeline for its work. He endorsed the amendment concerning a ministerial conference, proposed by Mali, which, he observed, was in line with resolution WHA58.34 on the Ministerial Summit on Health Research.

Professor FAIZ (Bangladesh) said that the draft resolution provided an opportunity to rethink WHO's responsibility in the promotion of health research, particularly the strengthening of research capabilities in developing countries. Those countries should concentrate more on translational or operational research than on basic research. Furthermore, given the tendency of research scientists in the developing countries to emigrate to the developed world, WHO had a crucial responsibility to initiate measures aimed at retaining such human resources in the developing countries.

Ms NGAUNJE (Malawi) said that health research should be encouraged, especially in the developing countries, facing as they did specific challenges – notably the brain drain. Incentives to undertake research fostered ownership and leadership, and helped in policy formulation. However, the developing countries also needed resources for their health research.

Dr MAKUBALO (South Africa) welcomed WHO's growing recognition of the role of research in achieving the important health goals being considered by the Health Assembly. Countries should make a sustained investment of 2% of their national health budget in research. The entire spectrum of research was important, as were the strengthening of mechanisms and regulatory frameworks, and the management of national health research systems.

She sought further clarification on the mechanisms for streamlining research initiatives inside WHO, urging the Secretariat to pay adequate attention to research in countries with a high disease burden, without overlooking the increasing burden of noncommunicable diseases. She urged support for initiatives to identify ways of generating and synthesizing knowledge and of translating research findings into programme implementation and policy formulation.

South Africa had made steady progress on a research infrastructure and oversight system. It had recently hosted a meeting attended by at least 20 southern African countries, aimed at coordinating and harmonizing registration and regulatory frameworks for clinical trials.

Mr A.P. SINGH (India) affirmed the need for further increasing WHO's role in health research in the face of widening disparities between nations' access to technology and research in medicine and health care. There was a perceived threat, particularly among developing countries, relating to the intellectual property regime, which would not promote innovations on neglected diseases, or in countries with limited capacity for technical innovation. WHO should provide professional help on the single-window system to scientists in order to protect and exploit new intellectual property generated through industry participation. WHO also needed to sensitize scientists to identifying gaps in knowledge and application. WHO could play an important role in the prompt protection of intellectual property.

In order to increase technology management skills in developing countries, WHO could facilitate the establishment of offices for technology transfer in major publicly-funded institutions with strong research and development. WHO could also assist in building the capacity of institutions to

¹ Document EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/2, summary record of the eleventh meeting.

conduct clinical trials, to strengthen their regulatory infrastructure, and to streamline the registration of ongoing trials.

Referring to the draft resolution and the recommended investment targets, he said that India was thought to be meeting those targets; however, in the absence of sufficient data, it was impossible to make a categorical pronouncement on the matter.

Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil), rising to a point of order, pointed out that there was no mention of agenda item 12.20, on public health, innovation and intellectual property, in the day's *Journal*. It had disappeared from the list of items earlier displayed on the monitor outside the conference room. He wanted time for Brazil to make a presentation on the subject, and sought assurance that there would be time for a working group to consider the related draft resolution, proposed by Brazil, for a full day, namely the following Monday.

Mr Zeltner resumed the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN said that agenda item 12.19, Health technologies, had been postponed at the request of Mexico, but that the timing of item 12.20 had not yet been discussed.

Dr DAYRIT (Secretary) said that the omission of item 12.20 from the *Journal* was simply a mistake.

Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil) proposed that item 12.20 should be considered before items 12.17 and 12.18.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America), supported by the delegates of the United Kingdom and Germany, opposed any reordering of agenda items. The draft resolutions on items 12.16, 12.17 and 12.18 had been on the table for some time, and there was no reason to rush into item 12.20.

The CHAIRMAN said that the order of items would remain the same, and the delegation of Brazil would be able to present its proposed resolution on item 12.20, and the related issue of the need for a working group, during the afternoon session.

Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil) asked whether it could be guaranteed that the item would be considered during the afternoon.

The CHAIRMAN said that it depended on how fast the Committee as a whole disposed of the intervening items.

Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil) suggested that it was in the Chairman's power to allocate extra time and thus to guarantee that the item would be considered during the afternoon.

Mr AITKEN (Office of the Director-General) explained that the question of the establishment of a working group could not in any event be resolved at that time, as the decision to establish working groups lay with the Committee, not the Secretariat, and would normally be taken during consideration of the item concerned.

Dr EVANS (Assistant Director-General) said that delegates' comments had been duly noted. Replying to the question from the delegate of Switzerland, he said that the external consultative group on the development of WHO's research strategy would comprise about 30 people, drawn from national health research councils, science and technical advisory committees, major funders, nongovernmental organizations with an interest in research, industry, and so on. It aimed to cover the whole range of research issues that the WHO research strategy was expected to need to accommodate. Invitations to join the group had recently been sent out by the Director-General.

Dr DAYRIT (Secretary) read out the proposed amendments. The delegate of Mali had proposed to add a preambular paragraph reading: “Recognizing the need to evaluate progress in health research since 2004 and to discuss the future needs of all Member States with regard to the promotion of fact-based health research and policies”, and to add a paragraph 3(18), reading: “to convene a ministerial conference on health research open to all Member States in Bamako in November 2008”.

The delegate of France had proposed the addition of the word “its” before “research proposals” in paragraph 3 (7).

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) asked what the cost implications were of the proposed additional subparagraph (18).

Dr EVANS (Assistant Director-General) said that the cost of preparing the proposed conference was already covered in the budget for the biennium 2006–2007, while that of holding it was included in the budget for the biennium 2008–2009, recently approved.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Progress in the rational use of medicines: Item 12.17 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R12, and A60/24)

Dr SADASIVAN (representative of the Executive Board), introducing the report, recalled that at its 120th session the Board had recognized the urgent need to promote rational use of medicines. The Board had adopted resolution EB120.R12, recommending adoption by the Health Assembly of a resolution that advocated a cross-cutting health-systems approach, particularly through multidisciplinary national monitoring bodies. It had been agreed that national programmes would vary between countries; however, the components listed in paragraph 5 of document A60/24 represented a good start.

Mrs NANHOE-GANGADIN (Suriname) supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R12, but proposed inclusion of the rational use of traditional medicines; their use was gaining ground and had to be dealt with by health-care systems. Traditional medicines had not yet been formally recognized in her country but, as part of the Government’s newly developed pharmaceutical policy, traditional healers and their products were being assessed, and regulations and legislation on traditional medicine were being prepared. Implementing the measures would require the support of WHO, PAHO and those Member States with relevant experience.

Dr AL GHAFIRI (Oman) said that WHO’s work on the rational use of medicines was a priority as medicines were a common denominator of work in other areas. Patients could only enjoy their right of access to medicines if the medicines were correctly provided and used. Her country had since 2000 had a department for promoting the rational use of medicines, and such use was included in the national Five-Year Health Development Plan. Considerable success had been recorded in the rational use of medicines on the same prescription, and the number of prescriptions for antibiotics had fallen because of the focus on more appropriate care. In addition to improving health, rational use had reduced financial and pharmaceutical waste.

Dr AL THOO (Bahrain), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, described irrational use of medicines as a tragedy. Developing countries were spending on average 30% to 40% of their regular budgets on medicines, yet half that amount was wasted through improper prescription and use. Consequently only 35% of people in developing countries had access

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s second report and adopted as resolution WHA60.15.

to medicines in a way that benefited them. All the hard work to improve access to medicines was wasted if medicines were not used appropriately, and irrational use could actually damage health. Despite the international concern about lack of access, the issue of rational use of medicines was not high enough on the political agenda. She therefore fully supported the draft resolution. She reiterated support for the Executive Board's decision to delink the issues of rational use of medicines and better medicines for children, and to present them to the Health Assembly as two separate items. Expressing satisfaction at WHO's continuing work in the area, she noted the Organization's participation in two international conferences that had collated considerable evidence indicating that ad hoc efforts to promote rational use did not work. Conversely, sufficient knowledge existed about successful interventions to enable rational use to be improved. Commitment, coordination and resources were needed at country level in order to translate such knowledge into action, which would save resources and improve health outcomes.

Ms JOHRI (India) said that her country recognized the need for rational use of medicines as the world was increasingly dependent on medication. Her Government had been promoting the rational use of medicines, including publishing standard guidelines, preparing a list of essential medicines and enacting or amending legislation. She supported the draft resolution and suggested that the Secretariat should increase the capacity of Member States, particularly developing countries, to undertake activities including: encouraging participation of stakeholders (including drug manufacturers, health professionals and consumer organizations) in disseminating information on rational use of medicines; training health professionals and medical students to withstand the pressures exerted by patients and aggressive pharmaceutical promotion; and monitoring pharmaceutical indicators in order to assess the impact of rational prescription and appropriate use of medicines. India would shortly be establishing a national drug authority that would respect world-class standards and practices. She urged that similar principles be incorporated in the resolution.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the fifth meeting.)

The meeting rose at 12:30.

FIFTH MEETING

Friday, 18 May 2007, at 14:40

Chairman: Mr T. ZELTNER (Switzerland)

TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Progress in the rational use of medicines: Item 12.17 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R12, and A60/24) (continued from the fourth meeting, section 3)

Ms IMAI (Japan) said that in Japan the importance of raising awareness about the nature of medicines, and especially the possibility of their adverse effects, had been recognized in discussions to revise the sales system of non-prescription medicines, and the law on pharmaceutical affairs contained an article to that end. Promotion of rational use called for a comprehensive approach, involving human resources in health services, the strengthening of health systems and information for consumers, and implementation of policy in areas such as safety measures and the monitoring of promotion of medicines. In that light, she supported the draft resolution. WHO should continue to lead in that area.

Dr SOMBIE (Burkina Faso), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, said that, despite the progress made, medicines (including those for children) were not always well prescribed, dispensed or sold, and half the patients failed to take them correctly. Roughly 10 million children died each year from infections, many of which could have been effectively treated by medicines that were, however, not always available because, for example, of cost or inappropriate formulation. Irrational use was more alarming in the case of children, in that the non-availability of appropriate medicines often resulted in the use of an unsuitable substitute. Information was lacking, at all levels, about the availability and cost of children's medicines. The list of essential medicines did not include all children's medicines.

Wrong use led to wasted resources and endangered health. Irrational use was more prevalent in the private than the public sector, because the former failed to apply appropriate policies and strategies, and the situation was exacerbated by the progressive privatization of health services and vertical programmes to promote improved access that did not invest in rational use.

As part of its medicines strategy for 2004–2007, WHO was supporting a number of Member States in developing and revising national lists of essential medicines, standardizing treatment guides, disseminating information, establishing pharmaceutical treatment committees, and adopting best prescription and dispensation practices.

He supported the draft resolutions contained in resolutions EB120.R12 and EB120.R13.

Mr ZHOU Jun (China) said that WHO should play its organizational and guiding role, promoting the exchange of experience and providing technical and financial guidance to developing countries and countries in economic transition. The rational use of medicines called for cooperation in a number of fields, such as the use of antibiotics in food production and animal husbandry. In addition, pharmaceutical companies should pay due attention to the rational use of medicines.

He supported the draft resolution.

Dr TIPICHA POSAYANONDA (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the South-East Asia Region, supported the statement made by the delegate of India. Irrational use of

medicines occurred throughout the world, irrespective of national, social and economic development levels. It increased medical care costs, for reasons such as adverse reactions. A wide range of factors encouraged improper prescription and dispensing. She emphasized evidence-based policy development and appreciated the outcome of the Secretariat's efforts, as reflected in resolution EB120.R12.

Correct use of pharmaceutical products called for strong political will and reforms at all levels. Educational programmes alone could not suffice, especially in the face of unethical targeting and advertising. Experience suggested that proper health financing and auditing of care provision could curb unnecessary prescribing. Promoting rational use of medicines depended on a broad range of partners and interventions. A national policy was therefore needed, supported by a multidisciplinary national body for monitoring and evaluation, in order to harmonize work towards high-quality use of medicines in both the public and private sectors.

She strongly supported the draft resolution and urged all Member States to promote the rational use of medicines.

Mr NIBLETT (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) strongly supported the draft resolution. His country had considerable experience in the rational use of medicines, both within its own health service and in its development work. The benefits of affordable medicines were not being fully realized because people tended to buy expensive medicines rather than the cheaper but effective generics that were available – an important issue for all countries. The United Kingdom had been in the forefront of studying the cost and clinical effectiveness of medicines, through its National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. WHO should in particular make its various guidelines and recommendations coherent and link them with the international community's commitment to increasing access to antiretroviral medicines for AIDS, new medicines for multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, and artemisinin-based combination therapy.

The United Kingdom supported European Union legislation to prevent direct promotion of medicines to the consumer, which caused part of the problem. It was encouraging that the Code of Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations was applied in developing countries.

The United Kingdom was developing the multi-donor Medicines Transparency Initiative in order to improve transparency in the pricing, availability and quality of essential medicines. The draft resolution was crucial for that purpose. His Government would work with WHO in order to make spending on medicines more effective.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) strongly supported the rational use of medicines and recognized the serious consequences, both human and financial, of their irrational use. The matter was complex and problems could arise at patient, physician, pharmacy, hospital or dispensing level. Notwithstanding that complexity, the report failed to focus on practical, sustainable and measurable action to which the Organization could contribute. He concurred with some of the interventions suggested in the report to promote more rational use, but was unsure that a "one-size-fits-all" solution – a government-run national programme – was the best option. Member States should develop programmes and policies based on their national contexts. With regard to national legislation on advertising and promoting medicines, the United States already had mechanisms for providing consumers with information that could facilitate treatment. The Food and Drug Administration would continue to monitor and, where appropriate, regulate promotional activities aimed at the medical community. It would be pleased to share its experience with other Member States.

He supported the draft resolution.

Ms TJIPURA (Namibia) said that her country had established its National Medicines Policy in 1998 and later the National Pharmaceutical Master Plan, which set forth broad objectives and strategies. The Government promoted the rational use of medicines in coordination with the regions, the private sector, professional associations and medical aid funds. The latter currently paid only for generic medicines, where available; patients paid the price difference if they insisted on the prescribed

branded product. The Essential Medicines Committee reviewed and approved medicines for the Namibia Essential Medicines List, which contained generic medicines for all the country's prevailing health conditions. Regular surveys of medicine use had revealed failure to comply with treatment guidelines for the use of antibiotics and of injections when oral dosage forms were available.

Despite some success, inadequate human resources hampered progress; as a result, the training of pharmacists and other health professionals had been accelerated. Since the country had no medical or pharmacy school, pharmacists and doctors employed in public health were trained at institutions where training programmes might not coincide with national treatment guidelines. In addition, private practitioners, as in other countries, were reluctant to comply with those guidelines.

She supported the draft resolution.

Mr ROSALES (Argentina) said that in his country access to medicines had been affected by the national crisis at the end of 2001. The Ministry of Health had introduced more equitable access to medicines through the "Remediar" programme, part of a strategy to reform primary health care, under which medicines were provided free to primary health-care establishments. A subprogramme on the rational use of medicines consisted of training for professional prescribers and community information. Developed in agreement with all provinces and taught in the country's medical faculties, it was an unprecedented instance of institutional and interprovincial collaboration in human resources training. About 5000 students from all the provinces' primary care centres were taking the course, which was financed entirely by the Ministry of Health.

Ms HELA (South Africa) said that strategies to promote rational use of medicines in developing countries needed to be evaluated in order to establish their appropriateness for different settings. The tendency had been to adopt models from elsewhere without sufficient adaptation to local communities, medical literacy, cultural norms, financial and human resources, and even geographical conditions of access. South Africa had implemented many of the strategies proposed in WHO's medicines strategy. It had issued an essential paediatric medicines list and standardized treatment guidelines in 1998; a second edition had been revised in 2006. The country also had legislation to prohibit perverse financial incentives, had introduced a single price from manufacturers and encouraged ethical promotion of medicines, but it still faced challenges, notably relating to traditional medicines. Legislation and regulations, monitored by a statutory body, also required medical insurance schemes to use evidence-based principles when drawing up their formularies.

She urged WHO to review the thresholds for rational use of some medicines, for example in regard to antibiotics for opportunistic infections associated with AIDS in countries with a high HIV prevalence; to strengthen evidence for the use of alternative therapies and traditional medicines; and to facilitate sharing of best practices for use of medicines in the private sector.

She supported the draft resolution.

Dr MAZHANI (Botswana) fully supported the draft resolution. A study on medicine use in Botswana had identified problems, including overuse of antibiotics and injections, short dispensing times, and failure to provide accurate information to patients. The Botswana Essential Drugs Action Programme continued to enforce and monitor the national medicines policy, but the country was short of skilled staff, particularly pharmacists. He urged WHO to continue providing technical support to countries like his for the sake of improved use of medicines.

Dr LEE Kang-hee (Republic of Korea) said that much remained to be done to promote the rational use of medicines. There were still cases of antibiotic overuse, adverse side effects and unreasonable spending. Her Government was monitoring implementation of a policy introduced in 2000 to separate prescribing and dispensing. From February 2006, all medical institutions in the country were required to publish their prescribing practices for antibiotics for upper respiratory tract infections and were discouraged from prescribing antibiotics unnecessarily. In 2006 the Government had adopted a system to list safe and effective medicines after evaluation of their economic and

therapeutic values. It would continue to reflect WHO's strategies in its domestic policies. She strongly supported the draft resolution.

Dr AL-MUDEHAF (Kuwait) supported the draft resolution. The rational use of medicines must be a priority because their irrational use harmed patients and led to drug resistance, wasting financial resources. Kuwait had tackled antibiotic resistance by preparing a protocol. Committees had also been set up to review medicine use in hospitals. Periodic reviews of drug resistance were made, lists of essential medicines drawn up, and users informed about the rational use of medicines with training for primary health-care workers. Prophylactic profiles were being drawn up for various diseases. Several decrees regulated the use of medicines in both the public and the private sector. WHO should continue to provide support to all Member States on the issue of the rational use of medicines.

Ms ALVES (Consumers International), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that Health Action International, of which Consumers International was a member, was a global network that had been involved with the rational use of medicines for more than 25 years. It strongly supported the draft resolution and had been active in framing it from the outset.

Poor prescribing, medicine overuse, increased adverse drug reactions and hospital admissions, artificially high expenditure on medicines, antimicrobial resistance, and increased morbidity and death were consequences of the irrational use of medicines. Without adequate monitoring of the extent and consequences of irrational medicine use, the problem would remain. The draft resolution established a framework on which to base a long-term programme of rational use.

Effective policy solutions were available and had been applied successfully in some Member States. The draft resolution would bridge the gulf between policies on paper and their implementation, providing for integrated programmes and reflecting national contexts. It would facilitate the enactment and enforcement of legislation banning unethical promotion of medicines, based on WHO's criteria. Its framework enhanced initiatives to contain antimicrobial resistance and achieve cost-effective outcomes.

She called on Member States to engage with all stakeholders and observed that civil society groups were ready to apply their expertise in the matter of implementation.

Mr CHAN Xuanhao (International Pharmaceutical Federation), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that his organization aimed to improve access to and the value of appropriate medicine use worldwide. The consequences of irrational use and the urgent need for action were clear, especially given the emergence of deadly multidrug-resistant strains of certain infectious agents. He urged improved rational use of medicines in both hospital and community settings and recognition of the value of pharmacists and their expertise at all levels of the health-care system. He drew attention to the WHO/International Pharmaceutical Federation statement on good pharmacy practice and to resolution WHA47.12 on the role of the pharmacist.

He supported the draft resolution.

Dr OMBAKA (CMC – Churches' Action for Health), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that the Christian Medical Commission of the World Council of Churches had introduced its Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network more than 25 years before. Members included intergovernmental organizations such as WHO, and the Network highlighted grass-roots issues. In sub-Saharan Africa, churches provided as much as 40% of the formal health-care services, especially in rural areas; rational use of medicines was crucial to their work.

It was of great concern that, 30 years after the concept of essential medicines had been introduced, about half the people in sub-Saharan Africa still did not have access to basic medicines. Even worse, of those who did, more than half received them in an irrational manner. It was encouraging that the draft resolution called for the establishment of multidisciplinary national bodies in order to address irrational use of medicines in a manner appropriate to national contexts. She supported the draft resolution and urged Member States to carry it forward into their national plans.

Dr ZUCKER (Assistant Director-General) welcomed the comments made by all delegations and nongovernmental organizations on the agenda item. Responding to the concern raised earlier by the delegate of Suriname, he said that traditional medicines were understood to be included under the umbrella term “medicines”. As mentioned by several speakers, the issue of rational use of medicines would indeed require effort at all levels and he looked forward to working with everyone on it.

The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R12.

The draft resolution was approved.¹

Better medicines for children: Item 12.18 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R13, and A60/25)

Dr SADASIVAN (representative of the Executive Board) said that at its 120th session, the Board had examined a report on better medicines for children, which contained proposals on improving access for children to essential medicines. The Board had adopted resolution EB120.R13 on better medicines for children, which contained a draft resolution recommended to the Health Assembly for adoption with proposals to improve the selection of essential medicines for children, research on appropriate dosage forms of medicine for children, quality testing and guidelines for improving the use of medicines for children.

Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil) said that he strongly supported modifying paragraph 1(7), whose language was too vague for such an important resolution. The wording should express the needs of developing countries, and should state that countries would use the full set of flexibilities contained in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS agreement) in order to guarantee access to medicines for children.

Dr DUQUE III (Philippines) welcomed the Secretariat’s report. The Philippines was committed to strategies for better medicines for children. He supported the strategic core of the draft resolution and advocated accessibility of essential medicines in a decentralized system, rational prescribing, affordable and available medicines, documenting good practices, and updating protocols with new recommended medicines for the treatment of pneumonia.

He proposed the inclusion of a new paragraph after paragraph 1(2), which would read: “to conduct antimicrobial resistance surveillance of the locally available and commonly prescribed medicines for children”.

Mr POMOELL (Finland) said that, although children accounted for nearly a third of the world’s population, few medicines were developed for them. Children had characteristics that varied with their age and development; prescribed treatment was not the same as for adults. In particular, paediatric medicines needed to have certain features in terms of pharmacokinetics, efficacy and avoidance of undesirable effects, and required appropriate pharmaceutical formulation to ensure easy and safe administration. Many medicines given to children had not been specifically evaluated for paediatric use and therefore did not have marketing authorization for children and did not meet the quality, safety and efficacy criteria required in the case of adults. The lack of appropriate medicines for children was a global problem, making it difficult to reach some of the Millennium Development Goals related to children. Better medicines would also contribute to the rights of the child. There had so far been no comprehensive global consideration of those issues. He was satisfied with the report and supported the draft resolution.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s second report and adopted as resolution WHA60.16.

Ms IMAI (Japan) supported the draft resolution. Problems relating to medicines for children included the fact that standard dosages and administration for children had not been determined and the safety of medicines had not been established. In order to promote evidence-based prescribing, scientific information on efficacy and safety must be gathered, evaluated and disseminated to health workers. Various measures had been taken in Japan to assist industry and the medical community in promoting the clinical development of medicines for children. The outcome of such an approach would also be beneficial at the international level. The issues surrounding medicines for children represented a major challenge in both developing and developed countries. From that point of view, WHO should examine the scope of activities from a broad perspective.

Mr ZHOU Jun (China) said that the issue of medicines for children needed more attention from the drug regulatory authorities, pharmaceutical companies, service providers and society as a whole. Furthermore, significant challenges remained to achieving the Millennium Development Goals of reducing child mortality and of halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr SINGAY (Bhutan) noted that, whereas medicines for adults were developed regularly, children were an underserved segment of the population. There was a lack of information on, and formulation of, medicines for children. Formulations for children were currently based on adult data and extrapolation rather than actual evidence. Paediatric formulations should be tested for safety and efficacy, but they should not be developed at the cost of access to medicines; they must remain affordable. Better medicines for children were crucial to achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals. The draft resolution was consistent with that on "Rational use of medicines", through the provision of medicines for a specific population and the specific adaptation of tools such as treatment guidelines and information on dosage and safety aspects. He supported the draft resolution.

Ms FARSAI CHANJARUPORN (Thailand) recognized the need for better medicines for children. In the light of constraints in the areas of discovery, development and delivery, including irrational use of medicines, and with a view to widening access to paediatric formulations, collaborative strategies were needed in the health sector and the broader areas of socioeconomic development and international trade.

She endorsed the draft resolution, even though some aspects were already well integrated into existing frameworks. In Thailand, the National List of Essential Drugs had since 1981 covered medicines for children and vaccines used in the Expanded Programme on Immunization. Many mechanisms promoted the use of the List and helped to distribute paediatric formulations to populations in need. It was not necessary to separate the development of essential medicines for children, and mechanisms for ensuring access to those products, from the process relating to medicines for adults. However, areas in which medicines for children were completely neglected or which required specific expertise and knowledge might benefit from new programmes.

She drew attention to the plan of action being drafted by the Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property. The plan's goal was to ensure access to essential medicines by removing international trade barriers. Most of the initiatives referred to in the draft resolution should be taken into account in the drafting of the plan, and she wished to insert a preambular paragraph in the draft resolution recognizing the parallel efforts of the Working Group and requesting the Director-General to ensure harmonization of all activities falling within WHO's mandate.

Considering how the TRIPS agreement and patenting systems could influence access to essential medicines for children, she proposed amending subparagraph 2(5) to read: "to collaborate with governments, other organizations of the United Nations system, donor agencies, the WTO, WIPO, nongovernmental organizations and the pharmaceutical industry in order to encourage fair trade in safe and effective medicines for children and adequate financing for securing better access to medicines for children".

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) said that all countries needed better medicines for children. The consequences of using ineffective, unsafe or improperly dosed medication in children were often serious, and included impaired development. Innovation and related incentives must be fostered with a view to developing better medicines for children, and information was essential. There was a paucity of: data on the frequency of use of medicines in children; treatment guidelines for nearly all paediatric diseases; paediatric prescribing information; age-appropriate paediatric dosage forms and strengths; and safety information. In order to fill those substantial gaps in information, the Secretariat should help to build the capacity of medicines regulatory authorities in Member States to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of medicines and biological products in paediatric patients. In addition, Member States should ensure that their national formularies included paediatric formulations, and that their social and private insurance systems provided reimbursement for them. The Secretariat could help to build capacity of Member States, particularly developing countries, to conduct clinical trials in children, to fill gaps in scientific information, and provide evidence for regulatory agencies and health ministries. He supported the draft decision.

Ms NGAUNJE (Malawi) drew attention to the high mortality rate in children under five years of age in Africa. In Malawi, infant mortality was 76 per 1000 live births, and under-five mortality was 133 per 1000. By December 2006, almost 85 000 people had been receiving antiretroviral treatment, of which 9% were children. Because essential medicines, including antiretroviral treatment and those for opportunistic infections, were not available in dosage forms for children or in suspension, “pill-cutters” were used in order to split adult doses, but uncertainty remained concerning the effective dose of such medicines for children. She welcomed the establishment of an expert subcommittee on selection and use of essential medicines for children with the terms of reference set out in paragraph 13 of the report. She supported the draft resolution.

Mr A.P. SINGH (India) said that in India the existing guidelines for the development of paediatric medicines required clinical trials and comparative bioavailability studies of paediatric and adult medicine formulations to be performed in adults and in the appropriate paediatric age groups. The National List of Essential Medicines promoted listed medicines, many of which were also available in paediatric dosage form.

The therapeutic strategy for children living with AIDS focused on early diagnosis and initiation of antiretroviral therapy in order to prevent disease progression and reduce the development of resistant viral strains. Advances had been made in the clinical management of HIV-infected children following the introduction of antiretroviral combination therapies for children. Various new formulations had been approved for the treatment of HIV infection in children.

He thanked partners, including WHO, for the support received by the National AIDS Control Organization and referred to WHO’s recommendations which provided guidance to paediatricians on prescribing antiretroviral medicines.¹

Dr ALLEN-YOUNG (Jamaica) recalled that, during the recent outbreak of malaria in Jamaica, tablets had had to be crushed in order to make a suspension for children because of the unavailability of paediatric dosage forms. Children should be perceived as individuals in their own right, with specific requirements; hence she supported the draft resolution. She commended the paediatric volumes of the British National Formulary, whose publication should enhance the focus on medicinal products and posologies for children.

Ms WISEMAN (Canada) highlighted the fact that many of the children under five years of age who died every year had died from treatable diseases. Despite the success of the WHO Essential

¹ *Antiretroviral therapy for HIV infection in infants and children: towards universal access. Recommendations for a public health approach.* Geneva, World Health Organization, 2007.

Medicines List, many medicines that were essential for children were not on the List and many that were included were not supplied in dosage forms suitable for children. A paediatric essential medicines list must be created. Educational materials must be provided to health-care workers for early diagnosis and intervention; research and development of paediatric formulations were required; regulatory registration must be supported; and the cost of medicines for children must be addressed. She strongly supported the draft resolution.

Dr NKURUNZIZA (Burundi) said that Burundi had adopted a strategy to reduce maternal and infant mortality by providing free health care for children under five years of age and free obstetric care. That had resulted in a significant increase in the number of children attending health centres and in the number of deliveries in health services. Before that, financial considerations and the absence of appropriate paediatric medicines had constituted major obstacles. She welcomed the draft resolution and thanked WHO, UNICEF and other partners for enabling free health care for children under five years of age to be introduced.

Dr HOPPU (International Pediatric Association), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, emphasized that access to safe and reliable medicines for children worldwide was essential to newborn and child health and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Association regretted that lack of access to, and rational use of, medicines for children remained a worldwide problem – concerns shared by paediatric pharmacologists, with whom an International Alliance for Better Medicines for Children had been formed. Many children, particularly in the developing world, did not have access to safe and effective medicines, for reasons including: lack of suitable formulations for children; lack of evidence-based treatment guidelines and definitions of essential medicines for children; inadequate training of paediatricians, pharmacologists, pharmacists and other child health providers; inadequate emphasis on research; widespread use of paediatric drugs which had not been tested in children; lack of global principles to guide safe and valid clinical trials in children; inadequate regulatory capacities; and insufficient focus of the WHO Essential Medicine List and formularies on the unique requirements of children.

It was important to base decisions concerning medicines for children on evidence of disease burden at country and regional levels, and the unique physiology of childhood. He supported the draft resolution.

Speaking on behalf of the International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology, he noted growing recognition of the need to give children access to appropriate medicines; the United States of America and the European Union had already implemented measures to that end. Although such measures were intended primarily to improve the public health of their respective paediatric populations, they had global consequences: about half the children involved in recent paediatric studies in the United States had been recruited in other parts of the world. The same could apply to the European Union with its new paediatric regulations. The need for better medicines for children and the burden of associated clinical trials required for their development were global, and the benefits of the trials should also become available globally.

Innovation must be fostered in order to develop new solutions and design ethical trials that demonstrated efficacy and safety. Researchers were needed to plan and perform the studies, as was the participation of children and families in the studies; regulators familiar with paediatric medicine were needed for assessing the medicines and clinical trials; and the pharmaceutical industry was needed in order to produce the medicines. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr ZUCKER (Assistant Director-General), welcoming all the comments, said that the Secretariat was working strenuously to address the issue of adult medicines having to be crushed to enable paediatric doses to be prepared.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should resume its consideration of the agenda item once a new version of the draft resolution incorporating the proposed amendments had been issued.

It was so decided.

(For continuation of the discussion, see summary record of the sixth meeting, section 2.)

Public health, innovation, and intellectual property: progress made by the Intergovernmental Working Group: Item 12.20 of the Agenda (Document A60/27)

The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to a draft resolution proposed by the delegation of Brazil, which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Recalling the resolution WHA59.24 establishing an intergovernmental working group for the purpose of elaborating a draft global strategy and plan of action to provide a medium-term framework based on the recommendations of the Commission on Intellectual Property, Innovation and Public Health, to secure, inter alia, an enhanced and sustainable basis for needs-driven, essential health research and development relevant to diseases that disproportionately affect developing countries, proposing clear objectives and priorities for research and development, and estimating funding needs in this area;

Recalling the Doha Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which confirms that the Agreement does not and should not prevent Members from taking measures to protect public health;

Concerned that 4800 million people live in developing countries (80% of the world population) and of those 2700 million live with less than US\$ 2 a day (56.25% of the world population);

Concerned that communicable diseases account for 50% of the developing countries burden of disease, and that access to medicines, vaccines and laboratory kits is hampered by prices that are beyond the reach of many in the developing world;

Concerned that noncommunicable diseases have an increasing impact on the burden of disease of developing countries;

Noting the growing criticism in developed and developing countries alike of the barriers to access posed by proprietary rights over treatment and care;

Concerned that sources of generic versions of new medicines are being limited as pharmaceutical product patents are adopted by almost all Members of WTO, and recognizing the importance of competition between manufacturers in reducing the price of medicines and other health products;

Recalling that in the Millennium Declaration, the Heads of State and Government recognized that, "in addition to our separate responsibilities to our individual societies, we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs";

Recalling the commitment of Heads of State to the Millennium Development Goals that will be achieved only through, among other things, the availability and affordability of medicines, vaccines and laboratory kits of good quality, effective, in sufficient quantities, and in acceptable forms;

Stressing that the global strategy and plan of action should constitute an agreed framework of reference to ensure the complete and unobstructed implementation of the flexibilities contained in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and recognized by the Doha Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health;

Considering that the Intergovernmental Working Group should (i) establish a research and development agenda that covers the health needs of developing countries, in accordance with the purpose of resolution WHA59.24; (ii) propose partnerships to implement such an agenda; (iii) propose an innovative mechanism to finance the activities needed to implement the

agenda; (iv) propose a governance system for such a mechanism; and (v) ensure that the health products that result from the medium-term framework, necessary for developing countries, namely medicines, vaccines, and laboratory kits, are affordable for public health or individual users, available in sufficient quantities to satisfy demand, acceptable to users, and effective and of good quality;

1. REQUESTS Member States fully and actively to support the Intergovernmental Working Group process and to provide adequate resources to WHO for this purpose;
2. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to be proactive and provide technical and policy support to countries that intend to make use of the flexibilities contained in TRIPS in order to increase access to existing medicines and to implement the Doha Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health;
 - (2) to express support for countries that make use of the flexibilities contained in TRIPS in order to increase access to medicines;
 - (3) to encourage, for discussion at the Intergovernmental Working Group, the development of proposals for research and development driven by health needs that separate the cost of research and development from the price of medicines;
 - (4) to take the lead in developing a methodology for setting priorities in essential research and development driven by health needs that specifies innovation in prevention, diagnosis and treatment for a number of priority health problems, especially those that disproportionately affect developing countries;
 - (5) to provide support for the development of proposals for the pro-health management of intellectual property through, for example, patent pools for medicines.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL expressed her commitment to the important work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property. Although her background as a drug regulator had ensured her understanding of the issues, since taking office she had become increasingly aware of their importance for Member States, and struck by their complexity. Following extensive technical briefings she was much better informed about the subject and what was needed.

She would participate in the Working Group's process in the following months. She needed to commit more resources, as had been advocated during the discussion of the Programme budget. She was aware of the need to supplement the Organization's expertise in some crucial areas. She sought confirmation from Member States of her understanding that the Secretariat was expected to produce, by July 2007, a working document that would form the basis of negotiations, so that regional consultations with key stakeholders could take place between July and November 2007. She would try to ensure that the second session of the Working Group allowed all Members an equal opportunity to join the debate and reach consensus.

Mr SILBERSCHMIDT (Switzerland) said that, having participated in the elaboration of resolution WHA59.24, his country remained engaged in working towards an ambitious, sustainable global strategy and plan of action.

An interministerial group had been set up that brought together the ministries responsible for economics and trade, health, research, development, human rights, foreign affairs, drug approvals and intellectual property. An achievement had been to build trust between the different players in Switzerland; overcoming lack of trust at the international level was also crucial. The interministerial group had analysed the recommendations of the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health and looked at what more could be done.

The revision of Swiss patent law would introduce an early working exemption in order to allow generics into the market and a broad exemption on research. Switzerland was about to implement the flexibilities to the TRIPS agreement allowing it to export medicines, under compulsory licenses to

countries without adequate production facilities. In WTO, it was proposing to waive tariffs for pharmaceutical products.

He concurred with the Director-General's understanding that the Working Group had mandated the Secretariat to produce a draft global strategy and draft plan of action by July 2007, which should be a negotiable text. The texts would take into account comments and suggestions by Member States. The draft texts would be the subject of national, subregional or regional consultations at the technical level, and discussed in all the WHO regional committees, before becoming the basis for negotiations at the second session of the Working Group in November 2007. Some regions would need support in order for those consultations to take place. Member States would need the "spirit of Geneva" if they were to achieve consensus and a meaningful plan of action. Switzerland would provide support for the process, including financial support, to regions in need.

Mr SCHRÖER (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that he welcomed the Director-General's commitment to that complex issue. He confirmed the Director-General's understanding of the Intergovernmental Working Group process, and summarized developments within the European Union since the 120th session of the Executive Board. In February 2007, the European Union had submitted written comments on the draft action plan to the secretariat of the Working Group. On 2 April 2007, the European Commission had organized an expert workshop on "Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property Rights: European Union input to the global debate", which had focused on three issues: how to improve access to medicines for neglected diseases; how research and development could be improved to prevent and treat neglected diseases; and what mechanisms were needed in order to support research and development. The workshop had concluded that there was unlikely to be a "one-size-fits-all" solution and that existing approaches should be developed, taking into account issues specific to certain countries and diseases. The workshop had recognized a need to provide additional support in order to promote research and development into neglected diseases, often viewed as unprofitable by commercial investors and for which affected countries lacked infrastructure and capacity. Existing initiatives should be scaled up, especially public-private partnerships, such as the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative, the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership Programme, and the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases. Research and development relied strongly on industry and vice versa. WHO should be closely involved in the clinical stages of development and in arrangements for the marketing of prioritized medicines. Civil society organizations should also play an important role, for instance by sharing their analyses.

Regarding improved access to medicines, the plan of action should clearly reflect the recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health. Creating and expanding pharmaceutical production facilities in least developed countries was a promising option, where economically and legally feasible. The pharmaceutical industry should contribute to improved access by applying tiered pricing schemas when marketing medicines in developing countries.

WHO should play a major role, alongside other international organizations such as WIPO and WTO, in improving access to research data and promoting innovation; it should assess and monitor, from a public health perspective, the impact of intellectual property rights and other factors on the development of new products and access to medicines and other health-care products in developing countries; and it should issue health research and development reports that identified needs related to pharmaceuticals.

During the 120th session of the Board, the European Union had drawn attention to the need for documents from the Working Group on the eight proposed elements in the plan of action. Those documents, including one matrix on ongoing activities and current gaps and another on current proposals (referring to stakeholders and the financial implications), should be received before August 2007 so that Member States could prepare for regional consultations.

Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil) welcomed the Director-General's reassurance. He recalled that, despite the "spirit of Geneva", at the conclusion of the first session of the Intergovernmental Working Group in December 2006, the process had lacked sense and direction. Given the lack of any criteria to guide the Secretariat in formulating a draft text, he suggested giving the Director-General a mandate to produce a text that could serve as a basis for negotiations. The draft resolution proposed by his delegation was intended to provide the sense and direction. He did not expect a substantive discussion at that juncture and was aware that many countries had different views, but the text of the draft resolution should help progress. He briefly explained its contents.

The first preambular paragraph referred to resolution WHA59.24, which spelt out the mandate of the Working Group. The ensuing preambular paragraphs concerned the general situation. He highlighted the passage in the Millennium Declaration in which the Heads of State and Government recognized their "collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level"; that was a crucial responsibility for WHO.

The last preambular paragraph concerned the sense and direction of the Working Group. All five elements were open to discussion. The first four concerned a research and development agenda covering the health needs of developing countries; partnerships to implement such an agenda; innovative mechanisms to finance the activities; and a governance system for those mechanisms. The fifth element referred to the very purpose of the strategy and plan of action, namely, to ensure that the resulting health products (i.e. medicines, vaccines and laboratory kits) were affordable, available in sufficient quantities, acceptable to users, effective and of good quality. The centre of gravity of the draft resolution was the request to the Director-General set out in five operative subparagraphs.

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that the issues of innovation and intellectual property rights in public health were multidimensional, especially in the context of developing countries. Some concerned the harmonization of intellectual property regimes required by the TRIPS agreement, while others focused on minimum levels of investment in research and development for medicine. The two aspects were linked and raised the question of why increased protection for intellectual property rights had not persuaded pharmaceutical companies to invest in medicines needed for neglected diseases in developing countries. The answer lay in the inherent difficulties of market-driven mechanisms in responding to public health needs, which the international community must face.

The lack of research and development for medicines perceived as insufficiently profitable by investors raised the issue of the role of the State in overcoming such a deficiency. Innovative solutions were required, as was a shift in patent protection in the context of developing countries. The report of the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health contained more than 60 recommendations and the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly had established a Working Group to develop a global strategy and plan of action. However, its first session, in December 2006, had resulted in little progress in terms of action; it had given the impression that innovation beyond the recommendations of the Commission's report would be difficult. Major issues included how research and development could be enhanced if intellectual property rights incentives failed to work; the search for alternatives; research and development capacity building; the transfer of technology; and the delivery of medicines on the basis of needs rather than ability to pay. In addition there were questions concerning the use of flexibilities in the TRIPS agreement in order to increase access to patent-protected medicines.

He urged WHO to strengthen the process by strong leadership and commitment. His Region firmly supported the process but all options should be examined, including such ideas as a research and development treaty, patent pools and innovative public-private partnerships. The Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean would convene a consultation in Cairo in August 2007 in order to expand regional input into the process.

Dr OKEYO (Kenya), welcoming the Director-General's commitment, said that the Working Group session in December 2006 had given the Secretariat a clear mandate to prepare the first draft of the global strategy and plan of action. One problem area was building trust among the players

concerned. The issues were complex and of major concern to African countries. Nearly five million children died every year from preventable diseases and nearly one quarter of a million women died from diseases for which simple, cost-effective treatment existed. Some people received no treatment because of the lack of research and development. For Africa, therefore, it was a very important process.

He welcomed the Director-General's remarks on funding. The African Region, which was supposed to play a key role in the process, had not held a consultative meeting, whereas the European Region had held more than four. The Director-General should help the African Region to discuss the issues among themselves and inform the process. Indeed, in some ways, the process was more important than the final product. If the process was not representative or did not build the necessary trust and confidence among the players, it would not work, whatever the outcome. At the first session of the Working Group, none of the experts appointed had been from Africa. In the interests of transparency and confidence in the outcome, there must be adequate representation of the region most affected.

The Working Group's process needed to be accelerated and he looked forward to collaboration by all key players.

Mr WATERBERG (Suriname), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Caribbean Community, said that in establishing the Working Group WHO had shown its concern that developing countries remained largely excluded from the benefits of modern science and technology. He reaffirmed support for resolution WHA59.24 and welcomed the inclusion of health products in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines, regardless of patent status, and the reference to medical devices and disposables for the treatment of noncommunicable diseases. However, the translation of TRIPS flexibilities into national law was a first step for many Caribbean countries, though Suriname lacked expertise in that very specialized area. He recalled that the 47th Directing Council of PAHO had urged Member States to "study the possibility to adapt, as needed, national laws to take full advantage of the flexibilities foreseen in the TRIPS agreement".¹ However, the burden of successful use of those flexibilities remained great for the economies of small countries; their limited human and financial resources made special treatment necessary, and WHO's support in that regard was needed. At global and regional levels, WHO should negotiate with organizations such as WTO to ensure that international public health was given prominence in trade policies. Innovation could not rely entirely on patent rights and free market forces. WHO and governments should become more involved. New mechanisms and sources of funding would sustain research and development and improve access.

He awaited the practical recommendations and action plan of the Working Group. Time would be needed for building capacity and human resources for innovation – matters of concern to small countries. He supported the draft resolution proposed by Brazil, with the following amendments: in the first preambular paragraph, the word "diseases" should be replaced by "health problems"; in the ninth preambular paragraph, recalling the commitment of Heads of State, the word "access" should be inserted after "the availability"; in the tenth preambular paragraph beginning "Stressing that the global strategy...", the words "the complete and" should be deleted; and in the final preambular paragraph a sixth action should be inserted, worded: "(vi) hold broad consultations within each regional setting in order to ensure coverage of the health needs of developing countries for the development of the global strategy and plan of action". In paragraph 2(2), the words "to express support for countries" should be amended to read "to support countries".

Ms DE HOZ (Argentina) commended the importance attached by the Director-General to the subject under consideration. The approaches contained in the report were appropriate and she supported the strategy. WTO's rules made it possible to impose limits on patent holders for reasons of public health under Article 5.2 of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property,

¹ Resolution CD47.R7.

Article XX of the 1947 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, Articles 8, 27, 3, 30 and 31 of the TRIPS agreement and the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health. More efficient use should be made of prevailing international rules concerning intellectual property, without amending the TRIPS agreement. Argentina shared the concerns expressed in the report regarding the intentions of developed countries to incorporate additional protective measures that could reduce access to medicines in developing countries. In that connection, Argentina had refrained from including provisions on intellectual property in agreements under negotiation, such as that between MERCOSUR and the European Union and, in the context of WTO, did not agree to the inclusion of protective measures over and above the TRIPS agreement. The Region of the Americas was committed to the Doha Declaration, and especially the decision of the WTO General Council of 30 August 2003 on the regulation of paragraph 6 of the Declaration, referring to the issuing of compulsory licences and the use of parallel import mechanisms. Regional dialogue on patent protection activities, access to medicines and the exchange of experiences had all been emphasized.

She supported the draft resolution presented by Brazil but proposed two amendments. In the last preambular paragraph, the wording of the phrase referring to the fourth action should be amended to read “consider the desirability of establishing a governance system for this mechanism”. At the end of paragraph 2(1), the following phrase should be added: “in particular the decision of 30 August 2003 of the WTO General Council on the application of paragraph 6 of that Declaration”.

Ms LANTERI (Monaco), rising to a point of order, said that as the draft resolution had been tabled only the previous morning it was too early, under Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, to discuss any amendments to the text of the draft resolution.

The CHAIRMAN confirmed the correctness of the previous speaker’s remark, but pointed out that no discussion or negotiation had yet taken place.

Mr A.P. SINGH (India) said that the Member States of the South-East Asia Region, on whose behalf he was speaking, had adopted a regional resolution pledging their support for the Working Group. They had held two regional consultations on the complex and interrelated subjects of public health, intellectual property rights, innovation and access. Despite their varying nature, size, levels of development and capacity in terms of pharmaceutical and vaccine research and development, Members in the Region were working in a spirit of cooperation. Their joint submission provided input for the first session of the Working Group, in which they had stressed collaboration, access to technology, and the need for radical thinking on access. New ideas would be required in order to finance research and development, such as patent pools or funded research and development for neglected diseases. Such new ideas would enhance the current systems, and the Working Group should explore them seriously. It was crucial to maintain the momentum and to keep to the timelines. The Region supported the draft resolution proposed by the delegate of Brazil.

Ms WISEMAN (Canada) appreciated the Director-General’s commitment. Canada was committed to the Working Group, and did not underestimate the challenge of reaching agreement on the discovery of new medicines, the development of safe and effective products, and providing access to those in need of them. All Member States must prepare for the next session of the Working Group in November. Although she appreciated the importance that the delegate of Brazil attached to the questions put forward in his draft resolution, many of them would undoubtedly enter into the deliberations of the Working Group and she did not wish to see the Health Assembly pre-empting its work.

Mr HOHMAN (United States of America) supported previous commendations of the Director-General’s commitment to the Working Group. Disappointment over the outcome of the first session of the Working Group was understandable, but an intergovernmental process always started slowly and struggled to build momentum. It was important to have strong support from the Secretariat in order to provide Members with a base for their work. Delegates, in their statements, should drive

home the message about the importance of the process, and continue giving the Director-General and her team their views on how to move it forward. They had done so at the 120th session of the Executive Board, the current Health Assembly, regional meetings and other intersessional events; and the Director-General had clearly taken those views into account. He was looking forward to seeing how they would be reflected in the document that the Secretariat was preparing to circulate in July 2007, and put a great deal of faith in its ability to serve as an effective and useful negotiating document.

Ms COPA ROMERO (Bolivia) thanked the Director-General for her words on intellectual property, a subject that affected the most vulnerable sectors of Bolivian society. Intellectual property rights must no longer hamper access of the populations of developing countries to health care, and new ways must be found to support innovation. To that end, her country would take an active part in the Working Group. In February, her delegation had put forward proposals calling, *inter alia*, for investigation into the collective management of intellectual property rights through procedures such as jointly held patents, and examination of the benefits of changing private incentives for research and development so that they were no longer linked to the price of medicines. She endorsed the draft resolution proposed by the delegation of Brazil.

The CHAIRMAN, recalling his experience with a working group set up to improve the working methods of the Executive Board and Health Assembly, said that shaping the intergovernmental process was a task not just for the Secretariat but for the whole community of Member States. It must come to a satisfactory and timely conclusion and must lose neither its momentum nor its spirit.

Dr ALLEN-YOUNG (Jamaica) said that she shared the concerns of developing countries over the still unresolved matter of intellectual property rights and medicines. The intergovernmental process must progress towards a global strategy that would include capacity building for small countries, whose slowness in introducing legislation and in grasping the subtleties of the TRIPS agreement had prevented them from taking measures to protect public health and to secure access to medicines. She looked forward to an effective and timely conclusion to the matter.

Following a procedural discussion involving Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil), Mr HOHMAN (United States of America), Ms KONGSVIK (Norway) and Mr BURCI (Legal Counsel), the CHAIRMAN suggested that an informal meeting should be held the next day to enable delegates to discuss ideas on the draft resolution.

It was so agreed.

(For continuation of the discussion, see summary record of the sixth meeting, section 2.)

The meeting rose at 17:40.

SIXTH MEETING

Monday, 21 May 2007, at 10:10

Chairman: Mr T. ZELTNER (Switzerland)
later: Dr A.A. YOOSUF (Maldives)

1. SECOND REPORT OF COMMITTEE B (Document A60/57)

Mr BIN AL-FAKHERI (Saudi Arabia), Rapporteur, read out the draft second report of Committee B.

The report was adopted.¹

2. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the Intergovernmental Working Group: Item 12.20 of the Agenda (Document A60/27) (continued from the fifth meeting)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the following draft resolution, proposed and revised by the delegate of Brazil following informal consultations:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Recalling the resolution WHA59.24, ~~establishing an intergovernmental working group for~~ **through which the IGWG was created with** the purpose of elaborating a draft global strategy and plan of action to provide a medium-term framework based on the recommendations of the Commission on Intellectual Property, Innovation and Public Health, to secure, inter alia, an enhanced and sustainable basis for needs-driven, essential health research and development relevant to diseases that disproportionately affect developing countries, proposing clear objectives and priorities for research and development, and estimating funding needs in this area;

Recalling the Doha ~~Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health~~, which ~~confirms~~ **stresses** that “the TRIPS Agreement does not and should not prevent Members from taking measures to protect public health”;

Concerned that ~~4800 million people live in developing countries~~ **2,7 billion (56.25%) of the 4,8 billion** (80% of the world population) **people living in developing countries live on** ~~and of those 2700 million live with~~ less than US\$ 2 a day ~~(56.25% of the world population)~~;

Concerned that communicable diseases account for **approximately** 50% of the developing countries burden of disease; and that access to medicines, vaccines and ~~laboratory kits~~ **diagnostic tools** is hampered by prices that are beyond the reach of many in the developing world;

¹ See page 313.

Concerned that noncommunicable diseases have an increasing impact on the burden of disease of developing countries;

Noting ~~the~~ **that** growing criticism **has been registered**, in developed and developing countries alike, **on** ~~of~~ the barriers ~~to access~~ posed by proprietary rights over **access to** treatment and care;

Concerned that sources of generic versions of new medicines are being limited as pharmaceutical product patents are adopted by almost all ~~Members of~~ **WTO Members**, and recognizing the importance of competition between manufacturers in reducing the price of medicines and other health products;

Recalling that ~~in~~ **according to** the Millennium Declaration, the Heads of State ~~and Government~~ recognized that, “in addition to our separate responsibilities to our individual societies, we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world’s people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs”;

Recalling the commitment of ~~the~~ Heads of State ~~to~~ **with** the Millennium Development Goals ~~that will only be achieved only through~~, among other things, **with** the availability, **accessibility** and affordability of medicines, vaccines and **diagnostic tools** ~~laboratory kits of good quality, effective~~, in sufficient quantities, **of good and efficient quality** and in acceptable forms;

Stressing that the global strategy and plan of action ~~should~~ **shall** constitute an agreed framework of reference to ensure ~~the complete and~~ unobstructed implementation of the **TRIPS** flexibilities ~~contained in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)~~ and ~~recognized by the Doha Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health~~;

Considering that the Intergovernmental Working Group should (i) establish a research and development agenda that covers the health needs of developing countries, in accordance with the purpose of resolution WHA59.24; (ii) propose partnerships to ~~implement such~~ **carry on the above R&D** ~~an~~ agenda; (iii) propose ~~an~~ innovative ~~mechanisms~~ **financial with a view to** finance the activities ~~needed to implement the~~ **that result from the R&D** agenda; (iv) propose a governance system for ~~such a~~ **the innovative financial** mechanism; ~~and~~ (v) ensure that the health products that result from the medium-term framework, necessary for developing countries, ~~namely - medicines, vaccines, and diagnostic tools laboratory kits, - are~~ **shall be** affordable for public health or individual users; **shall be** available in sufficient quantities to satisfy demand; **shall be** acceptable to users; ~~and shall be effective~~ **efficient** and of good quality **and shall be acceptable**; ~~effective and of good quality~~; (vi) **hold broad consultation within the different regional settings in order to ensure coverage of the health needs of developing countries**;

Welcoming, with enthusiasm, the commitment of the Director-General to the process spearheaded by the Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property;

EXPRESSES appreciation to the Director-General for her commitment and encourages her to guide the process to draw up a global strategy and plan of action that will provide a medium-term framework for needs-driven essential health research and development;

1. ~~REQUESTS~~ **URGES** Member States **to** fully and actively ~~to~~ support the Intergovernmental Working Group process and ~~to~~ provide adequate resources to WHO ~~for this purpose~~;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:
- (1) to ~~be proactive and~~ provide technical and policy ~~support assistance~~ to countries that ~~intend want~~ to make use of the **TRIPS** flexibilities ~~contained in TRIPS in order~~ to increase access to ~~existing~~ medicines, **vaccines, diagnostic tools and other health-care products in** and to implementing the Doha Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health;
 - (2) to ~~express~~ **provide technical and financial** support for countries that ~~make use of the flexibilities contained in TRIPS in order to increase access to medicines~~ **regional consultative meetings in order to set regional priorities that will inform the work of IGWG;**
 - (3) to encourage, ~~for discussion at the Intergovernmental Working Group, the development of proposals for research and development driven by a health needs that separate the cost of research and development from the price of medicines~~ **-driven R&D system for discussion at the IGWG that separates paying for the cost of R&D from the price of medicines, vaccines, diagnostic tools and other health-care products.**
 - (4) ~~to take the lead in developing a methodology for setting priorities in essential research and development driven by health needs that specifies innovation in prevention, diagnosis and treatment for a number of priority health problems, especially those that disproportionately affect developing countries;~~
 - (5) ~~to provide support for the development of proposals for the pro-health management of intellectual property through, for example, patent pools for medicines.~~

The financial and administrative implications of the draft resolution were:

1. Resolution Public health, innovation, and intellectual property	
2. Linkage to programme budget	
Area of work:	Expected results
Essential medicines	1. Implementation and monitoring of medicines policies based on the concept of essential medicines, monitoring the impact of trade agreements on access to quality essential medicines, and building capacity in the pharmaceutical sector all advocated and supported.
Communicable disease research	2. New and improved tools, including drugs, vaccines and diagnostic tools, devised for prevention and control of infectious diseases. 5. Partnerships established and adequate support provided for strengthening capacity for research, product development and application in disease-endemic countries.
(Briefly indicate the linkage with expected results, indicators, targets, baseline)	
The resolution builds on resolution WHA59.24 and is consistent with the above-mentioned areas of work and expected results. Additional work resulting from this resolution is consistent with the expected results proposed under strategic objectives 1, 2, and 11 in the Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013.	

3. Financial implications**(a) Total estimated cost for implementation over the “life-cycle” of the resolution (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000, including staff and activities)**

US\$ 950 000 over three years to cover both the remainder of the biennium 2006–2007 and the biennium 2008–2009 (US\$ 450 000 for staff costs and US\$ 500 000 for operational costs, including coordination, technical assistance and activities).

(b) Estimated cost for the biennium 2006–2007 (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000, including staff and activities) US\$ 220 000**(c) Of the estimated cost noted in (b), what can be subsumed under existing programmed activities?** None.**4. Administrative implications****(a) Implementation locales (indicate the levels of the Organization at which the work will be undertaken and identify the specific regions where relevant)**

Headquarters and all regional offices will be involved. Normative, technical and coordinating work will largely be performed at headquarters.

(b) Additional staffing requirements (indicate additional required staff full-time equivalents, noting necessary skills profile)

In order proactively to provide technical and policy support to countries, one additional full-time professional staff member with technical expertise in public health and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) will be required at headquarters.

(c) Time frames (indicate broad time frames for implementation and evaluation)

Some of the proposed actions are currently being implemented; implementation of the other actions will be initiated during the present biennium. The implementation of the resolution will be part of the programmatic work in the areas of work mentioned above, and will therefore be subject to the same periodic evaluation as WHO's other activities in these areas. Proposed actions to be undertaken in the biennium 2008–2009 will be subsumed under the relevant strategic objectives, and monitored and assessed in accordance with the Organization's accountability framework.

Ms IMAI (Japan) said that developing new medicines and enhancing access to medicines for diseases that disproportionately affected developing countries were global challenges. Japan was contributing to the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Technical cooperation was being provided in the public and private sectors through training courses and by deploying experts in the areas of medicines, vaccines and intellectual property. Her Government supported the views expressed by the delegates of Canada and the United States of America and would participate actively in the discussions of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property, whose outcome should not be prejudged by the Health Assembly.

Dr OGWELL (Kenya), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, said that the global strategy and plan of action could be expected to secure a sustainable basis for essential health research and development, especially for diseases that disproportionately affected the poor, together with objectives, priorities and funding estimates.

At its first session in December 2006, the Working Group had considered a draft plan of action. The document due to be prepared later in 2007 on the basis of that discussion and Member States' submissions would be the subject of regional consultations before the second session of the Working Group in November 2007, but that session might not be sufficient to achieve consensus. Since no

structured consultations had been held so far in the African Region, he urged the Secretariat to facilitate regional consultations before the annual sessions of the regional committees. He stated that all Member States of the African Region endorsed the submission made by Kenya to the Working Group. In addition, the Secretariat should make the draft plan and other reference documents available in all six working languages as soon as possible, and secure resources so that, should negotiations not be completed at the second session of the Working Group, a follow-up session could be held in early 2008 before submission of the report to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly.

He supported the proposed draft resolution with the following amendments: the insertion in the eleventh preambular paragraph, subparagraph (iii), of the word “mechanisms” after the word “financial”; and the inclusion of a new subparagraph 2(5) to read: “to provide technical and financial support to the Intergovernmental Working Group and ensure that it completes its tasks in time for the report to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly”.

The CHAIRMAN said that amendments to the revised draft resolution would be considered later.

Dr ZAVARZINA (Russian Federation) said that in recent years the Russian Federation had emphasized the introduction of new health-care technologies, through innovation and a focus on the relationship between treatment, diagnostic technologies, and the production of pharmaceuticals. Application of research findings had been facilitated by the strengthened links between business and the development of new technologies. The national focus on innovation and intellectual property had coincided with WHO’s strategic directions. Exchange and coordination with WHO should be enhanced through a permanent forum, bringing together representatives of academic circles, pharmaceutical, biotechnological and other technological organizations, medical research councils, private and public partners, and civil society organizations.

The Russian Federation supported the Working Group’s draft plan of action in eight priority areas, and would participate in the consultation process for the elaboration of documents in the area of intellectual property.

Ms VIELMA (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), referring to the first session of the Working Group, endorsed the view expressed by Member States that transfer of technology and management of intellectual property should be highlighted and added as separate elements to the draft action plan.

Turning to the annex to the report, she drew attention to paragraph 6, which seemed to encourage an approach that would foster an individualistic, rather than collective, culture in developing countries based on protectionist patenting policies. Such a practice produced few benefits for public health in developing countries; only solidarity, cooperation and joint efforts could help them to benefit from and apply research. With regard to the principle that countries should provide in their legislation powers to use flexibilities allowed under the TRIPS agreement, such powers might be useful in promoting research relevant to the health problems of developing countries, but it was unclear how public health would take precedence over intellectual property and patents.

Referring to paragraph 10 of the annex to the report, she suggested that the word “innovative” should be deleted. In paragraph 11, the word “licensing” should also be deleted. Throughout paragraph 12, the phrase “public–private partnerships” should be replaced by “partnerships between the various funding sectors” and in the sentence beginning with “the pharmaceutical industry” the phrase “as a proportion of their earnings” should be inserted after the word “activities”. In paragraph 14, the words “advance-purchase” should be replaced by “procurement with replenishment of the investment”, the word “essential” should be inserted before “medicines”, and the phrase “which are considered to have a major impact on public health” should be added.

Intellectual property rights must not hinder access to medicines or policies aimed at protecting public health through development, research and public sector investment.

Mr WU Peixin (China), welcoming the plan, said that China would continue to lend its support to regional negotiations. His Government agreed on the areas for early implementation. The recommendations formulated should take into account the public health requirements of developing countries. WHO should prioritize existing recommendations, enhance coordination of health research, set up long-term financial mechanisms for supporting innovation, undertake priority research on major diseases in developing countries and build up the latter's own research capacity. Innovation and intellectual property must be protected and encouraged, while public health requirements must also be respected, so as to achieve an appropriate balance.

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that at the second session of the Working Group his country would continue to advocate promoting public health by making intellectual property rules more flexible, rather than the inverse. That was why discussions were taking place under the auspices of WHO. He supported the draft resolution as amended.

Mr PHAM HONG NGA (Viet Nam) observed that Member States remained divided over whether intellectual property rights had an impact on public health, perhaps for want of evidence, particularly with regard to access to medicines. The Working Group should consider including further, more concrete studies in that field. It was important to reach agreement on WHO's role. He supported the view that WHO was the only international organization with a specific health perspective. WTO had been established to deal mainly with trade issues, and WIPO to concentrate on intellectual property rights; however, WHO was the most relevant agency to bring all three areas together for discussion in a global forum such as the Health Assembly, using Member States' expertise in all three fields. WHO should find ways to help developing countries regulate the prices of health services and of patented and generic medicines.

Dr PONGSADHORN POKPERMDEE (Thailand) said that intellectual property protection was important in encouraging research and development for medicine and technology. However, it was vital to ensure access to essential medicines and health technologies at affordable prices, particularly for developing countries. He welcomed the Director-General's commitment to the Working Group process and supported the draft resolution. It was important to speed up the work of the Working Group.

Dr BALE (International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, welcomed the opportunity for Member States and others, through the Working Group, to elaborate and enhance constructive measures to promote research and development into diseases, particularly those affecting developing countries. The Working Group should base its work on accurate and up-to-date knowledge. There were at least 17 drugs and two vaccines in development for tuberculosis, a research and development laboratory in Bangalore, India, entirely dedicated to innovative tuberculosis drug research, 740 ongoing clinical trials for tuberculosis drugs and vaccines worldwide, and 43 drugs and vaccines in development for neglected tropical diseases; those activities were being carried out by companies alone or in public-private partnerships. WHO needed to ensure that the framework paper being prepared for the Working Group included information on what was already being done and what needed to be done, to prevent the Working Group from making serious mistakes in its policy recommendations. The successful work of the public-private partnerships could perhaps be translated into measures that would encourage them to do more. His industry was committed to contributing to the work of WHO and the Working Group in support of fact-based policy.

Mr BALASUBRAMANIAM (CMC – Churches' Action for Health), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, spoke on behalf of his, and other organizations, including Knowledge Ecology International, Health Action International and the *Médecins sans Frontières* Campaign for Access to Essential Medicines. The Working Group had been asked to implement the recommendations of the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health, including the need to protect access in order to obtain affordable products. He supported Brazil's proposals for research and

development that separated paying for the cost of research and development from the price of medicines.

A *Médecins sans Frontières* symposium held in January 2007 had endorsed the idea of a research and development treaty for sustainable sources of financing for research and development for diseases such as tuberculosis. Participants had suggested that the Working Group should develop proposals for de-linking incentives from drug prices in order to reward the impact of inventions according to health-care outcomes. Knowledge Ecology International had proposed taking some of the budget of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for drug purchases in order to create a prize fund that would reward developers of second-generation drugs in return for licensing their inventions to a patent pool that would facilitate generic competition for products.

The Working Group should encourage public submissions on matters of substance and procedures. A group of nongovernmental organizations had set up collaborative brainstorming on new paradigms and provided technical support to country delegations.

Dr ZUCKER (Assistant Director-General) agreed that the issue was complex and challenging; however, all Member States wanted better public health, which was central to ensuring a positive outcome to the discussions. WHO would provide all documentation relating to a global strategy and plan of action, as well as background documents; the concerns raised and the comments made would be addressed as soon as possible. The Organization would continue to work with WIPO and WTO, bearing in mind that there was no “one-size-fits-all” answer, and that capacity building would need to be specific to countries’ needs. The eight elements in the draft action plan would be dealt with fully. Intersessional meetings would begin in the coming months and, once Member States had received the documents, they would have a starting point for their discussions. Regional activities would be convened in parallel with the intersessional meetings. WHO would hold regional consultations in preparation for its regional committee sessions, especially in the African Region, which had grave concerns on the issue. He acknowledged the need to expand the pool of experts, ensuring balanced representation in terms of region and gender, and of developing and developed countries; and the Secretariat would work with all Member States on that issue.

He thanked the Brazilian delegation in particular and all the Member States for their passionate approach, acknowledging the need to move forward on the issue.

The CHAIRMAN opened discussion on the revised draft resolution.

Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil) explained that there had been an informal meeting on the draft resolution proposed by his delegation. Many amendments had been introduced to improve the English of the original draft. Two new paragraphs had been added to the end of the preambular part. All amendments were highlighted in bold type.

Ms DE HOZ (Argentina) supported the draft resolution as amended, indicating that progress had been made and welcoming the reference to the Director-General’s commitment to the process. She suggested two amendments: in the eleventh preambular paragraph, section (iv), the word “propose” should be replaced by the phrase “consider the value of establishing”; and in paragraph 2(1), the phrase “in particular the decision of 30 August 2003 of the WTO General Council, on the application of paragraph 6 of that Declaration” [original Spanish] should be added after the words “... implementing the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health”.

Ms BLACKWOOD (United States of America) noted that the informal group was moving in the right direction. She acknowledged that the proposed amendments to the draft resolution aimed to tighten up the text and emphasized respect for the Working Group process.

Mr SCHRÖER (Germany), speaking on behalf of the 27 Member States of the European Union, expressed the European Union’s unconditional commitment to the Working Group, which had the technical expertise to ensure a positive and balanced outcome. He agreed with the delegate of the United States of America, but was unsure about some of the proposed amendments, which seemed to

be more than just improvements to the English. He envisaged a process-oriented resolution endorsing the personal commitment of the Director-General, but it would be necessary to consider the draft resolution carefully to achieve that. He asked the Chairman to clarify how discussion on the draft resolution might proceed.

Ms COPA ROMERO (Bolivia) supported the draft resolution. Her Government considered the issue a priority, and Bolivia had made an important contribution to the Working Group in preparing a global strategy and plan of action. She expressed satisfaction at the commitment of the Director-General which would be manifested in how WHO directed the activities of the Working Group.

Mr SANTA CRUZ (Chile), noting that in the sixth preambular paragraph the term “proprietary rights” in English had been translated into Spanish using the word for patents, asked for the Spanish text to be brought into line with the English.

In paragraph 2, the phrase “and other international agreements” should be added after the words “... the Doha Ministerial Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health”, because the technical assistance provided by WHO with regard to flexibilities related not only to the TRIPS agreement but also to other multilateral or bilateral international agreements. In the same paragraph, in the fourth line of the English version, he proposed that the word “in” should be replaced with “and”.

Mr BEYER (Switzerland) fully supported the Working Group process and looked forward to contributing to the negotiations on a global strategy and action plan in November 2007. He supported the comments made by the delegate of Germany on behalf of the European Union, and by the delegate of the United States of America, on the draft resolution; however, with only five months until the second session of the Working Group, he saw no need for a further resolution. Resolution WHA59.24 gave a clear mandate and a defined process. He welcomed the Director-General’s commitment to the process and was confident that the Secretariat would provide a comprehensive draft in July 2007 as the basis for the discussions the following November. The draft resolution pre-empted the ongoing process in the Working Group, because it addressed substantive points that would have to be discussed in the Working Group. Any draft resolution at the current time should focus on the ongoing process, in order not to prejudice the work of the Working Group in November. Changes to the original draft resolution went in the right direction but further substantial amendments were still necessary.

Dr RODRÍGUEZ (Ecuador) expressed his country’s support for the draft resolution, especially the part dealing with patents and quality control. Mechanisms were needed to enable laboratories to certify the quality of medicines. Countries also needed to be able to prevent contraband medicines from being marketed or sold in pharmacies, and public establishments needed to be able to control the quality of the large quantities of generic medicines they bought. He urged the Director-General to support the improvement of quality-control mechanisms, so as to enhance drug safety and efficacy.

Ms WISEMAN (Canada) expressed her appreciation of the work done at the informal meeting. However, the draft resolution should focus on advancing the Working Group process and not pre-empt the work it had been set up to do. Canada would propose some amendments to the text in order, for example, to ensure recognition of relevant international organizations and avoid a narrowing of the focus of the Intergovernmental Working Group’s work. There was currently an excessive focus on pricing, whereas it was widely accepted that broader factors affected people’s access to medicines.

The CHAIRMAN said that, in view of the number of amendments proposed, it was clearly desirable to set up a drafting group open to all Member States. He suggested that it should be chaired by Dr Shangula (Namibia).

It was so decided.

(For continuation of the discussion, see summary record of the eighth meeting, section 2.)

Health technologies: Item 12.19 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R21, A60/26 and A60/26 Add.1)

Dr SADASIVAN (representative of the Executive Board) said that a report and a draft resolution prepared by the Secretariat had been considered by the Executive Board at its 120th session. The Board had identified three areas of concern with regard to the draft resolution. The first had been met by deletion of the word “essential” from the title. The Board had considered that further work was needed to resolve the other two areas, namely, the scope and the listing of health technologies. It had requested the Secretariat to amend its report and remove any references to those concerns, to consult with experts nominated by Member States, regarding such issues, and to place the subject on the agenda of the forthcoming session of the Board. The Board had adopted a resolution for consideration by the Health Assembly urging Member States, *inter alia*, to draw up national guidelines and plans for the assessment, procurement and management of health technologies and asking the Director-General to support Member States as necessary in the prioritization, selection and use of health technologies. The Board recommended that the Health Assembly should adopt the draft resolution contained in resolution EB120.R21.

Mr SALEHI (Afghanistan), speaking on behalf of the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that inappropriate investments led to the wastage of already meagre resources, while the improper selection, management and use of such technologies increased the cost of health care. Proper management of health technologies was essential. Indeed, despite the enormous sums of money spent, most Member States did not regard such management as an integral part of public health policy. In developing countries, a high proportion of medical technology did not meet local needs or was used ineffectively. Inadequate data made actual use at all levels difficult to assess. Many countries lacked national policies and regulations, experienced inequitable access, unavailability or irrational use, had no systems to monitor quality and safety, and were affected by poor management and maintenance.

The Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean had promoted the use of appropriate and essential technologies, *inter alia*, by adapting a global action plan on the management, maintenance and repair of medical equipment, and by issuing a series of guidelines on health-care technology management. In 2006, the Regional Committee had adopted a resolution on medical devices,¹ which had called on Member States to collect information, develop national plans and establish regional centres of excellence for assessment, selection and management of such devices.

It was most important to contain burgeoning costs by establishing priorities. The proposed resolution was commendable; however, its implementation was a matter of concern. Regional strategies were needed in order to contain cost inflation and inefficiencies in health technology assessment and management. In addition, the Secretariat should help Member States to determine the technologies needed at each level of health care, to promote centres of excellence and the sharing of experience, and to develop guidelines.

He requested the Secretariat to help countries to develop national programmes and implement policies. It should provide guidance on essential health technologies at the various levels of health-care delivery; make available the necessary tools to enable Member States to assess the feasibility and appropriateness of technologies; develop a method for the assessment of needs and the selection, acquisition and management of health technologies; provide technical support to countries in the Region for determining the types of technology needed at each health-care level or setting; and

¹ Resolution EM/RC53/R7.

define the criteria for centres of excellence in health technology. Such centres would also deal with the quality and maintenance of equipment and capacity building.

Sound regional strategies on health technologies should cover all areas of concern discussed by the Board and include the recommendations of a meeting of experts from interested Member States. The resolution should therefore be amended to include a clear definition of the scope of health technologies and the need for a way to enable each country to develop a minimum list of necessary technologies. He accordingly proposed three amendments to the draft resolution. A new paragraph should be inserted after the first preambular paragraph, worded as follows: "Understanding that a health technology refers to the application of organized knowledge and skills in the form of devices, medicines, vaccines, procedures and systems to solve a health problem and improve quality of lives;". A new subparagraph should be added after paragraph 1(4), to read: "(5) to collect information that interrelates health technologies, which are considered indispensable in dealing with priority public health conditions at different levels of care and in various settings and environments, with sufficient supplementary information on needed infrastructure, procedures and reference tools;". Another new subparagraph should be inserted after paragraph 2(2), to read: "(3) to develop methodological tools to support Member States in their analyses of health technology needs and health systems prerequisites at country level;".

Ms NGAUNJE (Malawi), speaking on behalf of the 46 countries of the African Region, supported the draft resolution on health technologies, and urged the Secretariat to adopt a five-pronged approach to the issue of health technologies. First, in collaboration with interested Member States and WHO collaborating centres, countries should receive support to develop a framework for the provision of safe and reliable health technologies. Secondly, where necessary, help should be provided to Member States in how to assess their national needs for health technologies and ensure their availability and use. Africa's vulnerability to counterfeit devices and substandard second-hand equipment made it imperative to ensure good manufacturing and regulatory practices, and thus high-quality, safe and efficient medical devices. Thirdly, technical guidance and support should be provided to Member States in the implementation of health technology policies. Fourthly, in collaboration with other United Nations system and international organizations, academic institutions and professional bodies, Member States should be supported in the prioritization, selection and use of health technologies. At the core of that collaboration was the linking of health technology to the burden of disease and the level of service to be provided. Lastly, the Director-General should report on implementation of the resolution to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly.

Dr ZAVARZINA (Russian Federation) said that her country had set up a federal agency in order to provide services and ensure management for the development and application of health technologies, including new methods of diagnosis. To achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals, issues concerning health technologies had to be tackled. She therefore endorsed the Secretariat's report. It was important to provide good-quality health-care services in keeping with international standards, which were the basis for the development of health technology, and which would benefit from high-level international cooperation. In providing technical assistance, the Secretariat could help to assess needs and set priorities with regard to health technologies. Cooperation agreements should define the instruments for providing the necessary assistance in line with national priorities. The Secretariat should help to ensure that projects were carried out by joint action and took account of national priorities in the allocation of funds, since modern health technology was extremely costly. The Russian Federation was keen to set up monitoring and assessment systems so that it could follow up the implementation of programmes and projects. The principles of WHO – openness, accountability and a responsible approach – were vital to progress in health technology.

Expressing support for the draft resolution, she said that health technology must be supported by the necessary instruments, in order to contribute to prevention, treatment, diagnosis and rehabilitation; it also had to meet internationally agreed aims, especially the health-related Millennium Development Goals. In addition, it had to take account of possible changes in legislation and ensure that strategies could be implemented with due concern for quality and effectiveness. From the economic point of

view, standardization would facilitate access to health care. The technical support provided by the Secretariat and Member States should be stepped up through the development of guidelines, norms and standards for national health technology policies. It was also important to ensure the rational choice and acquisition of medical devices. Furthermore, constant attention must be paid to the education and training of specialists. WHO should support international cooperation among patients' organizations, professional organizations, and technical and educational organizations and institutions. The Russian Federation needed to work more closely with the Secretariat by setting up collaborating centres, so that future health technologies and advances in health technology research could be properly regulated in keeping with international standards. She endorsed the list of WHO's basic functions as a leader in international health care.

Dr DEMIRALP (Turkey) said that the high cost of procuring and operating essential health technologies meant that countries with limited resources relied on WHO – in cooperation with other organizations of the United Nations system, international organizations, academic institutions and professional bodies – to publish guidelines that would help them identify their population's needs, choose appropriate technologies in accordance with their disease burden, and ensure that their health staff were properly qualified to operate those technologies.

Mr BELVETT (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Caribbean Community, expressed support for the draft resolution and welcomed the recommendations of the Expert Group on Health Technologies regarding the provision of interrelated sets of data, supplemented by information and analytical tools, which would support Member States in assessing their health-technology needs, and ultimately improve national health-care delivery systems. He emphasized support to countries in understanding the economic implications and preventing the widening inequities that resulted from expensive health technologies.

Ms YUAN (United States of America), observing that the use of safe, high-quality health technologies could make a decisive contribution to world health, urged Member States to develop the necessary regulatory structures. The Secretariat could act as a clearing house for evidence-based information on medical devices. She supported the original version of the draft resolution, but would need to consult with her Government before considering inclusion of the amendments suggested by the delegate of Afghanistan concerning a list of essential technologies and infrastructure.

Dr PONGSADHORN POKPERMDEE (Thailand) said that every country needed to prioritize its health-technology needs. Fair and ethical resource allocation was equally important in order to ensure that health-care systems derived maximum benefits from investment in those technologies. Thailand had set up a new agency to assess medical devices, medicines, clinical procedures and public-health interventions, and to build the necessary institutional and human capacity. Countries lacking the means to assess every health technology might be denied the information needed to make the right decisions and so might waste precious resources. The Secretariat could provide a list of health technologies suited to priorities at various levels of health care. To that end, paragraph 2(3) of the draft resolution could be amended to read: "to provide technical guidance and support to Member States, where necessary, in implementing policies on health technologies, in particular for priority burden of diseases, according to different levels of services in developing countries;".

Ms VELÁZQUEZ BERUMEN (Mexico) requested that the draft resolution should be amended to include the results of the meeting of the group of experts reported in document EB121/11; the definition set out in paragraph 3 of that document; and the proposal in paragraph 9(a) regarding a clearing house related to clinical guidelines at different levels of care. She further suggested adding a reference to planning in evaluation and procurement in paragraph 1(2) and to harmonized international practices regarding medical technologies in paragraph 1(3).

Mr BENKACI (Algeria) said that hospital managers were struggling to operate, or even to understand the purpose of, heavily marketed medical devices which were increasingly being introduced into their health-care systems, because they lacked the basic scientific and technical benchmarks. It was crucial, especially for developing countries, to have a database of information on assessed, tested and approved devices, together with instructions for use. The Secretariat could support countries that lacked the budgets to evaluate every device.

Dr OKEYO (Kenya) said that for the sake of clarity the draft resolution should include the definition of health technologies set out in paragraph 3 of document EB121/11. He further suggested adding to paragraph 2 of the draft resolution a new paragraph 2(5) reading: “to establish and update regularly an evidence-based, web-based health technologies database which provides guidance on appropriate health technology according to levels of care, setting, environment, health intervention intended, tailored to the specific needs of a country or region,” and a new paragraph 2(6) reading “to provide support to Member States with vulnerable health-care systems to identify and put in place appropriate health technology needs to facilitate access to quality health care in primary health-care settings;”. The existing paragraph 2(5) would then become paragraph 2(7).

Dr SINGAY (Bhutan) supported the draft resolution. Evidence-based, cost-effective and safe health technologies were crucial tools for meeting key public health needs. Bhutan was in the process of reviewing its health policy and prioritizing those needs, giving due consideration to quality, safety, cost-effectiveness, availability, access and sustainability. He requested the Secretariat to set standards and guidelines, and assist Member States by building a database to determine which health technologies would be best suited to different levels of health-care delivery.

Mr VAN OMMEN (Netherlands), supported by Ms BARNES (Ireland), suggested replacing the term “health technologies”, wherever it occurred in the text, by “medical devices”; inserting an additional paragraph in the preamble to read: “Noting the need to expand expertise in the field of medical devices;” replacing “national guidelines” in paragraph 1(3) by “national or regional guidelines” (given that it referred to competencies within the European Union); and adding “and a standardized glossary of definitions” after “norms and standards” in paragraph 2(1). He commended the emphasis placed on medical devices in the broadest sense of the term in the report. The draft resolution should reflect that emphasis and focus on public health considerations as opposed to cost containment since medical devices covered a wide area, extending from prevention and diagnosis through therapy to rehabilitation.

Ms KONGSVIK (Norway) recalled that establishing a list of essential medicines had become crucial for enabling Member States with limited economic resources to prioritize their needs in respect of new and expensive medicines. Would such a list be equally successful where similar guidance was required from WHO for the selection and acquisition of medical devices, a subset of health technologies? In the event, the case made by the Secretariat combined with the comments from developing countries had been compelling, and Norway was in favour of the initiative.

She requested clarification from the Legal Counsel as to whether normal procedures had been followed in setting up the group of experts; whether all the participants had been independent experts, or whether Member States’ governments had also taken part; and whether the full report would be made available.

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) said that health technologies represented a complex area with rapid innovation, evolution and breakthroughs in diagnostic and treatment medical technology. The Secretariat should provide Member States with up-to-date information and advice on those technologies together with the analytical methods for prioritizing their public-health requirements. It should accomplish that task in a transparent manner, as efficiently as possible. The draft resolution should reflect those considerations. He welcomed the amendments that had been proposed by the delegates of Kenya and the Netherlands.

Mr WU Peixin (China) said that the non-rational use of health technologies was of concern to every country, and that it was therefore important to ensure the efficiency of the work done in the field of public health policy-making. He supported the draft resolution. The Secretariat must establish standards, regulations and guidelines to help Member States to choose the appropriate medical devices and use them in a safe and efficient manner. The Organization must take account of differences in national health systems in order to provide practical advice. It should encourage exchanges of information in regard to assessment in order to help the development of national policies.

Mr PHAM HONG NGA (Viet Nam) agreed that misuse and overuse of medical devices had increased medical costs, making basic health-care services unaffordable for poor people, especially in low-income countries. The solution lay in national policies based on needs, a health technology assessment system, and multisectoral cooperation and monitoring. WHO had a role in the development of assessment standards, guidelines and tools, and attention must go to supporting poor countries in the rational use of medical devices in accordance with their own health priorities.

Dr MOOSA (Maldives) commended the current initiative in the neglected area of health technologies, which should pave the way for their rational use. The Secretariat should strengthen its capacities in that area, both at headquarters and in the regions, in order to provide clear guidance to Member States and their regulatory authorities.

Dr ZUCKER (Assistant Director-General) said that it was evident from the number of delegations taking the floor that the subject of health technologies and how they could be used to improve public health was a universal concern.

The Secretariat had convened a group of experts on the subject in order to address issues raised at the 120th session of the Executive Board. The experts, from interested Member States, had held two meetings. In response to the question from the delegate of Malawi, he said that WHO was already working on the issue with other organizations. He agreed with the delegate of the Russian Federation that priorities in health technologies needed to be established. Definitions of health technologies had been considered by the group of experts. He thanked the delegates of Jamaica and Mexico for their contributions, agreeing with the former that equity was very important. With regard to the points raised by the delegates of Kenya, the Netherlands and Ireland, he recognized that the distinction between medical devices and health technologies was complex and said that the definition proposed by the delegate of Kenya might clarify the issue. He thanked the delegate of Bhutan for his efforts in moving forward the issue of health technologies, both through work in his country and in his collaboration with the Secretariat.

Dr GROTH (Essential health technologies), replying to the delegate of Norway, said that, pursuant to an undertaking given by the Director-General at the 120th session of the Executive Board, a group of experts on health technologies had been convened for a consultative meeting (Geneva, 26 and 28 March 2007). Fifteen members of the Board had been invited to select experts to attend the meeting, based on their participation in the debate of the Executive Board. In addition to staff members from WHO headquarters, representatives of regional offices and industrial umbrella organizations had been present for the discussions. However, at the final session, where recommendations had been formulated, only the consultants selected by Board members had been permitted to participate, thus ensuring the independence of the expert group.

Dr ZUCKER (Assistant Director-General) said that the consultations on health technologies would initiate a process for closing the gap between developing and developed countries. In that regard, it would contribute to achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals.

Ms KONGSVIK (Norway) asked for further clarification from the Legal Counsel about whether the established procedure for convening an expert group had been followed. She understood that the group was in fact an intergovernmental group rather than an independent expert group, as she had been led to believe.

Mr BURCI (Legal Counsel) said that the establishment of the group had been discussed by the Executive Board at its 120th session and the Director-General had proposed that a group comprising experts and interested Member States should be convened to discuss the outstanding issues. He therefore agreed with the delegate of Norway that it was not an expert committee, but rather an ad hoc consultation group.

The CHAIRMAN, noting that five amendments had been proposed to the resolution, asked the Secretariat to prepare a revised text taking them into account, which could be considered later.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the ninth meeting.)

Dr Yoosuf took the Chair.

Better medicines for children: Item 12.18 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R13, and A60/25) (continued from the fifth meeting)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the revision of the resolution contained in resolution EB120.R13, incorporating amendments proposed by the delegations, which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on better medicines for children;

Recalling resolutions WHA39.27, WHA41.16 and WHA47.13 on the rational use of drugs, WHA41.17 on ethical criteria for medicinal drug promotion, WHA43.20 and WHA45.27 on the WHO Action Programme on Essential Drugs, WHA47.12 on the role of the pharmacist in support of the WHO revised drug strategy, WHA49.14 and WHA52.19 on the revised drug strategy, WHA54.11 on the WHO medicines strategy, and WHA58.27 on improving the containment of antimicrobial resistance;

Recognizing the efforts of WHO in collaboration with governments, other organizations in the United Nations system, universities, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations and funding agencies in areas related to improving access to better medicines for children;

Aware of the core components of WHO's global framework for expanding access to essential medicines;

Wishing to promote evidence-based selection and use of medicines for children by health providers and carers;

Aware that there are regional initiatives to address inadequate access to essential medicines for children;

Wishing to ensure better access to essential medicines for children as a prerequisite for achieving health outcomes as set out in the internationally agreed health-related development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

Aware that the lack of access to essential medicines of assured quality continues to pose significant risks of high morbidity and mortality in children, especially those under five years of age;

Recognizing the ongoing work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation, and Intellectual Property and the need to ensure harmonization of WHO's work on access to essential medicines [Thailand];

Concerned that children can be further disadvantaged by lack of physical and economic access to essential medicines, especially in vulnerable communities;

Recognizing that many countries do not have the requisite capacity to regulate and control medicines for children;

Aware that many manufacturers of essential medicines have neither developed nor produced appropriate dosage forms and strengths of medicines for children;

Concerned that there is insufficient investment in the clinical trials, development and manufacture of medicines for children;

1. URGES Member States:

(1) to take steps to identify appropriate dosage forms and strengths of medicines for children, and to encourage their manufacture and licensing;

(2) to investigate whether currently available medicines could be formulated to make them suitable for use in children;

(3) to conduct surveillance of antimicrobial resistance of locally available and commonly prescribed medicines for children [Philippines];

~~(34)~~ to encourage research and development of appropriate medicines for diseases that affect children, and to ensure that high-quality clinical trials for these medicines are conducted in an ethical manner;

~~(45)~~ to facilitate timely licensing of appropriate, high-quality and affordable medicines for children and innovative methods for monitoring the safety of such medicines, and to encourage the marketing of adequate paediatric formulations together with newly developed medicines;

~~(56)~~ to promote access to essential medicines for children through inclusion, as appropriate, of those medicines in national medicine lists, and procurement and reimbursement schemes, and to devise measures to monitor prices;

~~(67)~~ to collaborate in order to facilitate innovative research and development on, formulation of, regulatory approval of, provision of adequate prompt information on, and rational use of, paediatric medicines and medicines authorized for adults but not approved for use in children;

~~(78) to make use of mechanisms including, where appropriate, existing international trade agreements that might impact health, in order to ensure children's access to essential medicines, where applicable;~~
the flexibilities contained in the agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) in order to guarantee access to medicines for children [Brazil];

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to promote the development, harmonization and use of standards for clinical trials of medicines for children; to revise and regularly update the Model List of Essential Medicines in order to include missing essential medicines for children, using evidence-based clinical guidelines; and to promote application of such guidelines by Member States and international financing bodies, with initial focus on treatments for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and chronic diseases;

(2) to ensure that all relevant WHO programmes, including but not limited to that on essential medicines, contribute to making safe and effective medicines as widely available for children as for adults;

(3) to promote the development of international norms and standards for quality and safety of formulations for children, and of the regulatory capacity to apply them;

(4) to make available evidence-based treatment guidelines and independent information on dosage and safety aspects of essential medicines for children, progressively to cover all medicines for children, and to work with Member States in order to implement such guidelines;

- (5) to collaborate with governments, other organizations of the United Nations system, **including WTO and WIPO [Thailand]**, donor agencies, ~~and~~ nongovernmental organizations **and the pharmaceutical industry [Thailand]** in order to encourage fair trade in safe and effective medicines for children and adequate financing for securing better access to medicines for children;
- (6) to report to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly, and subsequently as appropriate, through the Executive Board, on progress achieved, problems encountered and specific actions needed to further promote better access to medicines for children.

Mr SCHRÖER (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, proposed that paragraph 1(8) should be aligned with the resolution on malaria, which had already been adopted, including references to the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights that had been agreed following lengthy discussion. The paragraph would therefore be further amended to read: “to use all necessary administrative and legislative means, including, where appropriate, the use of provisions in international agreements, including the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights in order to promote access to medicines for children;”.

Dr SHEVYREVA (Russian Federation) praised the work on the plan of action to ensure access to better medicines for children. A wider range of medicines was needed to treat serious and chronic diseases in children. Pricing was also important. Infectious disease was a main cause of admission of neonates and infants to hospital. More stringent quality control of medicines to prevent and treat infectious diseases in children was needed. She supported the guidelines, adopted on second reading by the European Parliament, regulating pharmaceutical companies within the European Union that produced medicines specially adapted for children. The Russian Federation was active in research on immunobiological medicines for children and wished to cooperate with WHO in compiling a single database of clinical research, with a view to developing routine vaccines. Additional clinical research on the safety and effectiveness of medicines for children should continue, but a global approach was needed. She supported the draft resolution.

Ms KONGSVIK (Norway) concurred with the delegate of Germany that agreed language from the resolution on malaria should be used, but suggested that it would be more appropriate to use the language from paragraph 1(5) rather than 1(6).

Ms PINTO FERNÁNDEZ (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her Government was taking action on the rational use of medicines and had established a list of essential medicines for children. A programme to facilitate the registration of new paediatric medicines should be set up. Turning to paragraph 13 of the report, she asked how the WHO model list of essential medicines would be drawn up and by whom. With regard to the suitability criteria for dosage forms of medicines for children, would there be any transfer of technologies? Would countries report on their patented methods?

In the draft resolution, the word “monitor” in paragraph 1(6), was very weak. In paragraph 1(7), she proposed deleting the term “innovative”, as it might raise issues of intellectual property. In paragraph 2(3), she proposed using the word “data” instead of “standards”. In paragraph 2(5), she suggested removing the reference to fair trade in safe and effective medicines for children, because it was a commercial issue relating to patents.

Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil), referring to the proposal made by the delegate of Germany to amend paragraph 1(8) using language that had already been agreed in the resolution on malaria, and the proposal by the delegate of Norway to use language from paragraph 1(5) of that resolution rather than 1(6), said that neither proposal was entirely satisfactory. Paragraph 1(6) used the unclear and inadequate phrase: “where appropriate”, which was often used in texts as a safeguard against unwanted action. The paragraph went on to refer to international agreements, before stating that one such agreement was that on TRIPS. That seemed to be a reversal of priorities and only served to

weaken the emphasis on the TRIPS flexibilities. Further, the word “promote” was used, when in fact the goal of the resolution was *to guarantee* that children would have access to the medicines they needed. Paragraph 1(5) of the resolution on malaria, which the delegate of Norway proposed in substitution for paragraph 1(8) of the draft resolution, used the phrase “whenever necessary”, which was weak. It was evident that, if it were not necessary, there would be no recourse to the TRIPS flexibilities. That paragraph also used the word “promote” rather than “guarantee”.

He therefore proposed recasting paragraph 1(8) of the draft resolution to read: “to use all necessary administrative and legislative means, including the use of the flexibilities contained in TRIPS, in order to guarantee access to medicines for children;”.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) advocated a moderate and measured approach. He disagreed with the amendment to paragraph 1(8) proposed by the delegate of Brazil for various reasons, including the fact that it did not strictly adhere to the language that appeared in the TRIPS agreement, which talked about “promoting” rather than “guaranteeing” access to medicine. WHO could not guarantee access, it could only strive to promote it. The words “where appropriate” were also very important, as they gave Member States the opportunity to take account of their own national contexts. He therefore suggested amending the proposal made by the delegate of Germany, using some of the language from the original draft resolution, so that paragraph 1(8) would read: “to make use of mechanisms including, where appropriate, international agreements, including agreements to reduce or eliminate tariffs on health-care products and the TRIPS agreement, to promote access to essential medicines for children;”.

Mr SCHRÖER (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the TRIPS agreement and issues relating to health and trade fell within the remit of the European Commission. He therefore requested that the representative of the European Commission, who had participated extensively in the work of the group, should be allowed to present his assessment of the situation.

Ms KONGSVIK (Norway), referring to the term “guarantee”, said that the flexibilities in the TRIPS agreement alone could not guarantee anything. Of course WHO should aim for a guarantee, but many other elements were needed before that would be possible.

Dr OKEYO (Kenya) suggested that, if a consensus could not be reached on the amended draft resolution, a drafting group could perhaps be set up to re-examine the text.

Mr RAJALA (European Commission), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that it was unfortunate that the Committee was returning to an issue that had already been discussed at length in the drafting group for the resolution on malaria. If the two key contentious issues could be solved quickly, there would be no need for a drafting group. He agreed with the proposal made by the delegate of the United States of America, but said that there might be an easier solution. It had been agreed in the drafting group that the paragraph in question was not relevant for some Member States, particularly rich countries that did not have a generic pharmaceutical industry; hence the reference to “whenever necessary”. Further, as the delegate of Norway had pointed out, the TRIPS agreement alone could not guarantee anything, so the word “promote” had been agreed upon. If those two elements could be added to the amendment proposed by the delegate of Brazil, the draft resolution would then be in line with the language in the resolution on malaria.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Member States that had proposed amendments should hold an informal discussion to agree on a revised version of the draft resolution for consideration at the next meeting.

It was so agreed.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the seventh meeting.)

The meeting rose at 12:55.

SEVENTH MEETING

Monday, 21 May 2007, at 14:50

Chairman: Dr A.A. YOOSUF (Maldives)

TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Better medicines for children: Item 12.18 of the Agenda (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R13, and A60/25) (continued from the sixth meeting)

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) said that the delegates of Brazil, the European Commission, Norway, Thailand and the United States of America, in an informal meeting, had reached agreement on the following wording for paragraph 1(8): “to use all necessary administrative and legislative means, including, where appropriate, the use of provisions in international agreements, including the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, in order to promote access to essential medicines for children”.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

Progress reports on technical and health matters: Item 12.21 of the Agenda (Document A60/28)

G. Sustaining the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders (resolution WHA58.24)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a draft resolution proposed by the delegations of Argentina, Bhutan, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Zimbabwe, which read:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having noted with appreciation the report on sustaining the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders;²

Noting that, although progress has been made by some Member States in the sustained elimination of iodine deficiency disorders in the past two years, between one fourth and one third of the world’s population still suffers from this micronutrient deficiency, most of them in impoverished areas of the world;

Concerned that iodine deficiency can prevent the optimal development of children’s brains, with possible consequent learning impairment with subsequent social and economic consequences;

Recognizing that the fight against iodine deficiency contributes directly to many of the internationally agreed health-related goals including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, including eradication of extreme poverty, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, achieving universal primary education, and promoting gender equality;

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s third report and adopted as resolution WHA60.20.

² Document A60/28, section G.

Applauding the support of international and bilateral development agencies and nongovernmental bodies, including Kiwanis International and the International Council for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders provided to Member States in sustaining the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders, and the coordinating function of the Network for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency,

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to redouble their efforts to reach those people not yet protected from iodine deficiency disorders and to sustain successful programmes on a continuous basis;
- (2) to implement the recommendation in resolution WHA58.24 to establish multidisciplinary national coalitions in order to monitor the state of iodine nutrition every three years;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General to continue to strengthen WHO's cooperation with other organizations in the United Nations system in supporting Member States in fighting iodine deficiency and report on iodine status every three years in compliance with resolution WHA58.24.

The financial and administrative implications of the draft resolution were as follows:

1. Resolution Sustaining the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders	
2. Linkage to programme budget	
Biennium 2008–2009	Expected result
Strategic objective: 9	4. Capacity built and support provided to target Member States for the development, strengthening and implementation of nutrition plans, policies and programmes aimed at improving nutrition throughout the life-course, in stable and emergency situations.
(Briefly indicate the linkage with expected results, indicators, targets, baseline)	
The resolution will strengthen WHO's cooperation with other agencies in support of Member States' fight against iodine deficiency.	
3. Financial implications	
(a) Total estimated cost for implementation over the "life-cycle" of the resolution (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000, including staff and activities) Nil	
(b) Estimated cost for the biennium 2006–2007 (estimated to the nearest US\$ 10 000, including staff and activities) Nil	
(c) Of the estimated cost noted in (b), what can be subsumed under existing programmed activities? Not applicable	
4. Administrative implications	
(a) Implementation locales (indicate the levels of the Organization at which the work will be undertaken and identify the specific regions where relevant)	
Headquarters, regional and country offices	
(b) Additional staffing requirements (indicate additional required staff full-time equivalents, noting necessary skills profile)	
None	
(c) Time frames (indicate broad time frames for implementation and evaluation)	
Reporting every three years	

Dr PRETELL ZÁRATE (Peru) welcomed the progress made in the area of iodine nutrition in the two years since the Health Assembly had adopted resolution WHA58.24, but noted that iodine deficiency remained a public health problem. Consumption of iodized salt was the most effective and the cheapest permanent solution. However, universal salt iodization must be monitored to ensure a normal iodine intake. States had an important role in ensuring sustained iodine intake through supervising the quality of iodized salt, promoting iodized salt consumption and periodically measuring its impact on the population. In order to avoid brain damage to a child, iodine intake was especially important during pregnancy and breastfeeding, when a mother's iodine requirement increased by 30%.

He supported the draft resolution, but with the fifth preambular paragraph amended to read: "Applauding the support of international and bilateral development agencies, especially WHO, UNICEF and WFP, and nongovernmental and private partners, including Kiwanis International, the International Council for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders and the Network for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency;".

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, supported the Director-General's efforts to highlight the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders, which affected many people in his Region, in particular young children and pregnant women. Iodine deficiency was one of the main causes of mental retardation and preventable cognitive impairment in children, representing a threat to national, social and economic development in many countries.

Iodine deficiency disorders were often hidden, despite their impact on populations. The Region had coordinated efforts in alerting Member States to the public health implications and in building national capacities for identification and management of those disorders. WHO's recommendation of salt iodization as the most effective strategy to eliminate iodine deficiency disorders had been adopted by all Member States. The Regional Committee's resolution EM/RC49/R12, adopted in 2002, urged Member States to legislate for universal salt iodization at the safe level recommended by WHO, and to establish monitoring and evaluation. All Member States in the Region had undertaken to make iodized salt available to the general population. Insufficient production and inappropriate pricing of iodized salt limited its consumption. Inadequate laboratory facilities affected quality control of iodized salt and the determination of iodine status. The poor enforcement of legislation allowed non-iodized and poor-quality iodized salt to enter the market. WHO and its partners should provide support for evaluation of national programmes for the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders. Quality control and assurance, were needed. The Secretariat should support the technical capacities of national standards and quality control bodies in Member States.

Mr ZHOU Jun (China) supported the draft resolution. States must work together in order to achieve the sustainable elimination of iodine deficiency disorders.

Dr ASLANYAN (Canada) expressed concern that greater international efforts had not been directed to overcoming a problem that significantly affected health and economic development. He urged all Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the goals set out in resolution WHA58.24.

Canada had been part of an international partnership which, over a single decade, had increased the number of households consuming iodized salt from 20% to 66%, and since 1992 had supported salt iodization programmes in 43 countries. His country was working with WFP on a micronutrient initiative in order to reach the remaining 30% of households without iodized salt. He supported the draft resolution.

Dr DIAKHABY (Guinea), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, supported the draft resolution. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognized that food and nutrition were fundamental human rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognized the right of children to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, and the obligations of States to fight illness and malnutrition. The United Nations General Assembly's special session on children had

renewed commitments to eliminating iodine deficiency disorders by 2005, primarily through universal salt iodization. Populations that engaged in subsistence farming often suffered iodine deficiency disorders as the soil lacked iodine; those disorders were the principal cause of cognitive impairment and frequently resulted in cerebral lesions, goitre, cretinism and miscarriages.

Since the World Summit for Children in 1990, Africa had progressed in making iodized salt available and 22 countries in the Region had raised their iodine intake to adequate levels. For instance, Nigeria had adopted a universal salt iodization strategy; more than 90% of all salt sold was iodized. Nevertheless, more than three million newborns every year, often in disadvantaged families, were at risk of iodine deficiency because their mothers did not consume iodine during pregnancy. Deficiency disorders could be combated by stronger political will, a better regulatory structure, the commitment of salt producers and importers and increased demand for iodized salt. Salt iodization, social mobilization within communities and the establishment of national and regional coalitions were essential strategies. Consumption of iodized salt was the sustainable solution to iodine deficiency disorders in Africa. Salt producers and importers should develop and follow a worldwide industrial code of conduct in order to ensure universal salt iodization, and small producers should be supported. All salt producers should guarantee a sustainable mechanism for the production of potassium iodate.

States should aim to achieve universal salt iodization in Africa by the end of 2007. Only iodized salt should be imported into the Region, and all communities and families should understand that iodized salt was beneficial for children's health and education.

Dr BURROW (International Council for Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN and on behalf also of the Network for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency, said that, despite progress, 2000 million people were still iodine deficient, mostly in economically disadvantaged areas, including 22 million newborns each year who might fail to reach their full intellectual potential. The use of iodized salt in an iodine-deficient population could increase the average IQ among children by as much as 13.5 points. Cognitive development and school performance would be enhanced, leading to greater economic productivity for the family, the community and the nation.

Universal salt iodization was a safe, cost-effective and sustainable strategy to ensure optimal iodine nutrition, and required commitment by Member States, salt producers and the public. WHO's Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health could be adjusted for salt consumption. Iodine deficiency could be eliminated at very low daily cost. Guaranteeing access for 90% of households to iodized salt was commendable but not enough. Unless iodine nutrition was maintained, the symptoms and damage caused by deficiency would soon recur. The elimination of iodine deficiency disorders contributed to meeting many of the Millennium Development Goals, including poverty reduction, infant mortality reduction, maternal health and education for all. He urged Member States to fight iodine deficiency disorders, and to adopt the draft resolution. His organization was ready to lend technical assistance to United Nations agencies.

Dr DAYRIT (Secretary) recalled that an amendment had been proposed to the fifth preambular paragraph, which read: "Applauding the support of international and bilateral development agencies, especially WHO, UNICEF, WFP, and nongovernmental and private partners, including Kiwanis International, the International Council for Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders and the Global Network for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency".

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's third report, and adopted as resolution WHA60.21.

A. Improving the containment of antimicrobial resistance (resolution WHA58.27)

Dr PHUSIT PRAKONGSAI (Thailand), noting that resolution WHA58.27 requested the Director-General to provide support for the generation of up-to-date information on antimicrobial resistance at regional and subregional levels and to make that information available to Member States and other parties, enquired about key activities conducted and progress made in generating such information. The resolution further requested the Director-General to provide support for gathering and sharing evidence on cost-effective interventions for prevention and control of antimicrobial resistance at national and local levels. So far there had been no evidence of any activities initiated by WHO either at headquarters or in regional offices; what had actually been undertaken and what was preventing WHO from fulfilling that task? He also requested information on the plan for improving the containment of antimicrobial resistance at global and regional levels in the biennium 2008–2009.

Mr JØRGENSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), said that containment of antimicrobial resistance was urgent; as indicated in the report, progress in combating the problem had been very limited. As the impact of antimicrobial resistance continued to grow, the lack of global leadership on the matter had potentially devastating consequences. A globally coordinated response was needed, and WHO's leadership in multisectoral efforts was of paramount importance.

The rational use of medicines was just one measure needed to contain antimicrobial resistance, yet it remained the essential focus of WHO's work. Antimicrobial resistance should also be placed at the core of the communicable diseases agenda. Ways needed to be found of measuring the global burden of disease caused by antimicrobial resistance.

He called on the Secretariat to report to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly on the implementation of resolution WHA58.27, clearly reflecting WHO's broad multisectoral leadership role.

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that antimicrobial resistance was a growing problem, yet not enough was being done to tackle it effectively. Containment of antimicrobial resistance should form part of wider efforts to contain irrational use of medicines. Thus, the intersectoral national task force to coordinate containment of antimicrobial resistance should be a subgroup of the overall national body on rational use of medicines.

In most developing countries, including those in his Region, despite regulations to the contrary, some specialized medicines, including antibiotics, continued to be widely available without prescription. Surveillance systems were weak in many of the countries, so that it was difficult to gauge the extent of inappropriate use of antibiotics. Those countries that were not monitoring the prevalence of resistance were the ones most likely to be least able to contain it.

Antibiotic resistance was a complex issue, with links to infection control, rational use of medicines and development of new replacement antibiotics. Progress was slow in all those areas. Where second-generation antibiotics were available, they were generally beyond the reach of those who needed them most.

Ms IMAI (Japan) said that antimicrobial resistance should be tackled urgently and globally, because of the risk of a possible spread across borders and the difficulty of treatment. Japan had been taking comprehensive measures including promotion of rational use of medicines; post-marketing surveillance of antibiotics use; surveillance of drug-resistant bacteria; and providing guidance on prevention of infection within medical institutions. Japan looked forward to WHO's enhanced activities.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) supported the statements made by the Nordic group and by Japan.

Dr ALA (Philippines) said that in her country the Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Reference Laboratory coordinated surveillance of antimicrobial resistance in common bacterial pathogens. Its data were used in the preparation of standard treatment guidelines for various infectious diseases and as criteria for inclusion of antimicrobial agents in the country's essential medicines list. Treatment algorithms had been drawn up for appropriate use of antibiotics. Compliance with guidelines for community-acquired pneumonia and tuberculosis was promoted by the "No compliance, no reimbursement" policy of the National Social Health Insurance Programme.

Dr ZUCKER (Assistant Director-General) agreed with the delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran that it was difficult to gauge the full extent of the problem. Responding to the questions from the delegate of Thailand, he confirmed that antimicrobial resistance was linked to the rational use of medicines. The Secretariat was taking a cross-cutting approach to both those issues, involving Member States and other organizations of the United Nations system, including FAO, in particular. The subjects were also covered by appropriations in the budget for the biennium 2008–2009.

B. Implementation by WHO of the recommendations of the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors (resolution WHA59.12)

Dr MESSELE (Ethiopia) said that high-priority interventions against HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia covered the three pillars of prevention, treatment, and care and support for the infected and the affected. Health promotion and social mobilization were enhancing community participation and reducing stigmatization and discrimination. The Ethiopian Millennium AIDS Campaign, launched in November 2006, had resulted in the testing of more than 600 000 people in two months, nearly double the planned target. The number of facilities providing voluntary counselling and testing had reached 926, and antiretroviral therapy was provided at 260 sites. The number of people taking free antiretroviral therapy had increased from 900 to 63 000 over three years.

A harmonized code of conduct had been signed in September 2005 between the Government and health partners. Development partners must align their strategies with country-led responses to HIV/AIDS and reduce administrative burdens.

Ms DE HOZ (Argentina) said that the global efforts to halt the HIV/AIDS pandemic were inadequate. One concern was the poor access of infected people to antiretroviral treatment. Antiretroviral therapy reduced mortality and increased years of healthy life. The global strategy of "3 by 5" had provided a large number of people with access to antiretroviral therapy, but much remained to be done. Her Government had a policy on antiretroviral medicines designed to prevent monopolies by admitting original product manufacturers to the market. It also covered the full cost of antiretroviral therapy, treatment for opportunistic infections and testing.

Ms PRANGTIP KANCHANAHATTAKIJ (Thailand), noting WHO's contribution to the recommendations of the Global Task Team, said that Thailand attached importance to strengthening national ownership and leadership. Support from multilateral agencies and other partners should be in line with national priorities, plans and strategies.

Mr RAMOTSOARI (Lesotho), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, said that they faced major challenges in their efforts to mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS. Already suffering from poverty and weakened social support services, younger generations were increasingly vulnerable. The older generation, mostly grandmothers, were taking on the responsibility of raising increased numbers of orphans, with meagre resources.

Coordinated national responses were essential. Most African countries had set up national HIV and AIDS coordination mechanisms, often answerable to the highest office of State. Such structures had facilitated national policy-making and strategy formulation, resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation, in line with the "Three Ones" principle. Benefits in the form of HIV/AIDS containment

and impact mitigation would accrue from efficient coordination, harmonization and leadership. The national coordinating structures mobilized financial and technical resources from all stakeholders. The Region was grateful to WHO and other aid partners for their support.

Published frameworks for coordination, monitoring and evaluation had reduced duplication of effort. Prevention was a priority and countries were expanding access to counselling and testing in innovative ways such as the Know Your Status campaign in Lesotho. New approaches to protection and impact mitigation for the most vulnerable members of society were facilitating access to basic education, health care and other basic services; protective laws were being enacted for women and children.

However, the African States still faced challenges in coordination, including the reluctance of some partners to adhere to agreed priorities. He commended WHO for its role of advocacy and partnership with the African countries.

Dr PRESERN (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), speaking also on behalf of Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway, welcomed the progress report and the remarks made by the delegate of Lesotho, which had put a human face on the need for enhanced coordination. Although the number of countries with joint teams was increasing, the number of teams with joint programmes was still low. Greater reorientation of agencies' programmatic focus around national priorities was needed, as was increased accountability of the joint United Nations teams to country governments.

An independent review of implementation of the Global Task Team's recommendations would be presented to the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board in June 2007. He requested a detailed response on how WHO would act on the recommendations, and explicit ideas from WHO about its responsibilities as a UNAIDS cosponsor. The European Union statement on the Medium-term strategic plan had expressed disappointment at the plan's silence on the Global Task Team and its minimal references to UNAIDS and division of labour issues. He also requested a substantive discussion on the findings of the independent review by the Executive Board at its session in January 2008.

Dr XUNDU (South Africa), commending the progress made, said that, in line with the "Three Ones" approach, South Africa had adopted a multisectoral strategic plan for HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections for the period 2007–2011. All Government departments and sectors of civil society were expected to use it as a framework for the development of their own plans. The coordinating mechanism, South Africa's National AIDS Council, had been restructured.

She was pleased to note that WHO was taking action to broaden application of the Global Task Team's recommendations to include other international donors. Interaction should cover technical support, alignment with national policies, financial management systems, programmes and funding. The Global Task Team could support countries in minimizing ineffective use of aid from private philanthropic foundations. Developing local skills and expertise should be encouraged. Demonstrable skills transfer should be an integral part of technical assistance.

Dr MAZHANI (Botswana) said that HIV/AIDS remained a major challenge in Botswana, which had participated in the continental consultation on universal access and endorsed the actions proposed in the Brazzaville Commitment. Results had been analysed in four workshops, and a road map for moving towards universal access had been developed. But human resource capacity, infrastructure and financial resources remained a challenge. Botswana applied the "Three Ones" principle, and was reviewing its national HIV/AIDS strategic framework. The country coordinating mechanism was being restructured for improved governance of funds from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and other sources. Other forums included the Botswana HIV/AIDS Partnership Forum and the Donors Forum, chaired by the Ministry of Finance.

Dr OKEYO (Kenya) said that UNAIDS had recently commissioned a study in order to assess the implementation of the Global Task Team's recommendations. The growing number of new

initiatives at country level had rendered coordination more complex; progress towards implementation of the recommendations was slow, with considerable strain placed on the health system. The Secretariat should use the findings in order to report on the implementation of resolution WHA59.12.

Ms MULLER (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that the Federation had formed a global alliance on HIV and AIDS, supporting country programmes. It involved regional networks, and funding and operating partners supporting community actions. In the 10 southern African countries, it had developed a five-year programme, aimed at reaching 10% of the population with prevention information, providing care, treatment and support for 250 000 people living with HIV and AIDS, and assisting 460 000 orphans. Similar programmes were being developed in other regions.

The key to success lay at the community level. The Federation, in collaboration with WHO and Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service, had developed a training package on all components of HIV and AIDS interventions, including treatment literacy, community mobilization and treatment preparedness, and promotion of adherence to treatment. The package for community volunteers could be used by all organizations and had been widely distributed.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the Federation and the Regional Office for Africa signed 10 days previously was a milestone.

C. *World report on violence and health: implementation of recommendations*

Ms GARGOMI (Jordan), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that violence affected all countries of the Region, in all areas – streets, homes, schools, workplaces and institutions. But it was commonly viewed as an issue of law and order, the role of health professionals being limited to dealing with its consequences. A change in attitude was occurring, however, encouraged by the launch of the *World report on violence and health*. The burden that violence placed on health institutions gave the health sector both a special interest in prevention and a key role. Raising awareness about prevention was only the first step. The Region was going through a difficult phase of political turbulence, involving all forms of violence, and the Member States concerned requested the Health Assembly and the Director-General to give special attention to capacity building, programme planning and resource mobilization in the Region. They noted with satisfaction that the injury prevention and control curriculum was one of the best capacity-building tools.

Mrs THOMAS (Sierra Leone), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that the recommendations made in the *World report on violence and health* complemented the action areas of the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a culture of peace. The global campaign for violence prevention, launched in 2002, provided for violence prevention and advocacy. In 2003, the Regional Committee for Africa, in resolution AFR/RC53/R3, had urged countries to advocate nonviolent resolution of conflicts; raise awareness of the public-health impact of violence and injury; implement prevention programmes; develop information systems for prevention; and encourage research. In 2004, the Regional Committee, in resolution AFR/RC54/R6, had called for multisectoral and coordinated responses for the prevention, care and management of child abuse. Heads of State and Government of the African Union had endorsed the recommendations of the *World report on violence and health* and requested Member States to develop plans of action for violence prevention and systems for data collection on violence; they had also requested Member States to declare 2005 the African year of prevention of violence. That year had seen raised awareness, and had mobilized political will and resources for violence prevention. WHO was working very closely with the African Union to that end.

In response to demand for assistance in implementing the report's recommendations, WHO had developed several tools, which had been disseminated as part of WHO's global campaign for violence prevention. Projects to document violence prevention had been carried out in Mozambique and South

Africa and should be replicated elsewhere in the Region. In addition, independent research into violence-related disease had been carried out in South Africa.

Gender-based violence against women was a major public health and human rights problem throughout the world. Multicountry studies on women's health and domestic violence had been carried out, and other countries were seeking to replicate the methodology. The services available to deal with sexual violence were inadequate; care workers often lacked the necessary training. The 2003 guidelines for medico-legal care for victims of sexual violence should therefore be disseminated more widely in the African Region.

WHO should work with other partners in devising a public health and human rights approach to violence prevention, and should disseminate the comprehensive injury prevention and control curriculum it had developed, for use in training medical personnel in Member States.

Ms KONGSVIK (Norway) drew attention to a United Nations study, inspired by WHO's 2002 study, on violence against children. WHO needed to be fully involved in the follow-up, in the context of the system-wide United Nations approach to that multisectoral problem.

Dr LE GALÈS-CAMUS (Assistant Director-General) affirmed that WHO was working closely with UNICEF in order to develop a follow-up plan, and would remain actively involved with the report.

D. Promotion of road safety and traffic injury prevention (resolution WHA57.10)

Ms GARGOMI (Jordan), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that adoption of resolution WHA57.10 on road safety and health, the dedication of the World Health Day 2004 to road safety and production of the *World report on road traffic injury prevention* had been strategies to prevent road traffic injuries. The United Nations had adopted similar resolutions and the G8 countries had commissioned an examination of support for low- and middle-income countries in their road-safety efforts. Following the recommendations made by that survey, the World Bank had created a facility in order to provide support to such countries. The recent First United Nations Global Road Safety Week was further proof of the international community's success in putting road safety high on the political agenda.

She recognized that such a broad issue required the engagement of many governmental and nongovernmental sectors, as well as civil society, in order to reduce the rising number of deaths and disabilities resulting from road traffic crashes in the Region. About 1.2 million lives were lost annually owing to predictable and preventable causes, a huge loss that compromised development and economic growth. Unless the subject was part of Member States' overall development agenda, deaths and disabilities due to road traffic crashes would continue to rise in the countries of the Region and many others.

Ms MAROUN (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that her organization, as a member of WHO's Road Safety Collaboration, had been able to bring community priorities into the discussions leading to the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week, thus optimizing the contributions of the Federation's volunteer base. It had published, jointly with the Global Road Safety Partnership, a practical guide on road safety for national Societies, in order to help the latter set up road safety programmes, design advocacy campaigns and form stronger relationships with their governments.

Youth vulnerability was of concern to her organization, which welcomed WHO's convening of the World Youth Assembly immediately before Global Road Safety Week. More than 1000 people aged under 25 were killed on the world's roads every day. The practical guide contained 20 key recommendations addressed to national Societies; but at least half were the responsibility of governments. There were excellent examples of work in the fields of public awareness, education and first-aid training from countries as diverse as Austria, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Lebanon, Peru, and the United Arab Emirates. The Societies would be inspired by the declaration adopted at the

World Youth Assembly that it was time for governments to acknowledge road traffic injuries as a major public health and development problem.

E. Disability, including prevention, management and rehabilitation (resolution WHA58.23)

Dr NETO DE MIRANDA (Angola), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that disability was a major public health problem in Africa, as a result of poverty, war injuries, landmines, HIV/AIDS, communicable diseases, poor perinatal care, malnutrition, road traffic injuries, and chronic somatic and mental conditions.

Since the period 1999–2009 had been declared the African Decade of Disabled Persons, African Heads of State and Government had adopted a plan of action. Projects and initiatives had been developed. National coordinating bodies had been created to rehabilitate disabled people. A series of country studies on the situation of disabled people had been initiated. Between 70% and 85% of disabled people in the Region lived in rural areas, where prevention and rehabilitation services were limited or unavailable. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals would be difficult unless disabled people were brought into the development process. Disability and poverty went together, and dealing with disability was a key to tackling poverty.

Most development programmes that dealt with disability were limited. Current challenges were: including disabled people in poverty alleviation initiatives; the inadequacy of human and financial resources; the lack of effective national rehabilitation programmes; difficulties of integration, stigmatization and discrimination; and availability of information on disability and poverty. She requested continued technical support in order to strengthen policies and programmes for the prevention of physical and sensory disability and to develop capacity for disability management. She also urged WHO to organize a regional meeting of experts in order to review the needs of people with disabilities, and to support the African States in collecting reliable data on disability, and in assessing the cost-effectiveness of interventions.

Africa continued to face challenges in putting into effect the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, and needed support in that regard. She welcomed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, looked forward to guidance from WHO on its implementation, and acknowledged the start of work on a world report on disability and rehabilitation.

Dr AL RASHIDI (Oman), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that disability was a neglected area within health systems worldwide, although it affected 10% of the world's population. Many of the disabilities in the Region were caused by natural and man-made disasters. The dominant approach in health systems appeared to be mortality reduction; the mobilization of resources for the prevention of disability should be a high priority.

Community rehabilitation programmes were appropriate, especially for developing countries, but they currently had poor coverage and needed to include activities to protect the dignity and rights of disabled people. Highlighting the prevention of violence and injuries should not mean ignoring the rehabilitation and empowerment of people with disabilities: a reasonable balance must be struck between the two approaches. Emphasis should be placed on mobilizing resources for prevention and rehabilitation and on supporting and scaling up the coverage of community-based rehabilitation programmes.

F. Cancer prevention and control (resolution WHA58.22): cervical cancer

Dr OPIO (Uganda), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, noted the substantial achievements made in fighting cervical cancer, which included: drawing up an action plan and the ongoing collaborative partnership between WHO and stakeholders to promote that plan; recommending prevention and control strategies; investigating and introducing alternative screening techniques that were more suitable for low-resource countries; and promoting applied research on vaccines against the disease.

Challenges that remained included: attaining universal and equitable access to cervical cancer prevention, screening, treatment and palliative care services, and meeting the high costs of delivering human papillomavirus vaccines. The decision as to whether and when to introduce those vaccines would be made at national level, based on the burden of cervical cancer and the risk of exposure to the virus in each country.

He requested the Secretariat to work with the African Member States to strengthen their capacity to implement cancer control programmes; to mobilize resources in order to implement cancer prevention and control programmes; and to promote further research on new diagnostic technologies, and research and development for cancer medicines.

Dr AL AJMI (Bahrain), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that cervical cancer was the second most common cancer among women in the Region. Although it was among the most preventable and treatable forms of cancer if detected early and managed effectively, patients in many countries were presenting late with advanced tumours, by which time treatment was difficult or impossible. Most women in the Region still did not have access to cervical cancer prevention programmes or adequate care; there was also a stigma associated with the disease, even among the health community. All women had the right to accessible, affordable and effective services for early detection of breast and cervical cancer; such services should be delivered as part of a comprehensive programme within an effective primary care system. A coordinated effort must be made to increase community awareness about ways of ensuring early detection of breast and cervical cancer. An integrated public health approach towards primary prevention of cervical cancer must be one of the modalities for health promotion in the Region. Additional funds and technical support must be mobilized in order to introduce national control programmes for breast and cervical cancer in the countries of the Region.

Dr VIOLAKI-PARASKEVA (Greece) expressed concern that it would take 10 to 30 years after a human papillomavirus vaccine was introduced for any reduction in cancer incidence and mortality to be measurable. In particular, countries would be unable to judge whether including the vaccine in their immunization programmes would be cost effective; any adverse reaction to the vaccine might go undetected; and the lack of adequate statistics on cervical cancer would make it impossible for many countries to measure the effectiveness of any immunization programme.

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) recognized the health risks and consequences of human papillomavirus infection and advocated strong immunization programmes and related health systems. He welcomed the comprehensive action plan and delivery strategies that integrated human papillomavirus vaccine into existing immunization programmes.

Dr EMAFO (United Nations International Narcotics Control Board) said that one objective of the United Nations drug control conventions was to ensure that drugs were available for medical purposes. Narcotic drugs were indispensable for the management of moderate to severe pain, and yet remained underused or unavailable in sufficient quantities, especially in developing countries. WHO and the International Narcotics Control Board had cooperated on raising awareness about the use of opioids in pain management and, recently, on implementing resolution WHA58.22. He advocated adoption of the framework for the Access to Controlled Medications Programme that had been jointly prepared by the Control Board and WHO. He urged all governments to examine the extent to which their laws and regulations permitted the use of opioids for medical purposes, to identify impediments, and to develop long-term strategies for pain management.

WHO should continue to work with relevant organizations in order to combat activities that undermined the rational use of medicines, including the counterfeiting of medicines and their distribution through unlicensed channels such as unregulated markets and Internet pharmacies.

Ms MAZZANTI (International Atomic Energy Agency) said that the Agency's Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy sought to raise awareness and increase financial resources in order to

establish model demonstration sites in six countries that were strengthening cancer control plans and coordinating mechanisms. The approach, centred on the work of national cancer control committees, would promote the use of standardized methods and tools for the development of plans for national cancer control. Through the model demonstration sites, the Programme would pay special attention to cervical screening and related diagnostic activities and promote awareness of such programmes in mortality prevention.

H. Strengthening active and healthy ageing (resolution WHA58.16)

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) welcomed the progress report and noted in particular the “age-friendly cities” project and the focus on adapting primary health-care capacity in order to meet the needs of older persons. He urged the Director-General to strengthen work on active, healthy ageing, as was called for in resolution WHA58.16.

Dr SHANGULA (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that, in African countries, older persons were traditionally respected and their health and social well-being taken care of by their children and extended family members, their role being that of advisor and leader. The time had come to recognize the contribution made by older persons at many levels. Platforms were needed that would enable older persons to exchange views and share experiences.

In the African Region, certain governments had adopted laws and developed strategies in order to tackle the health and social well-being of older persons. Some countries had provided for the payment of social grants or monthly allowances aimed at improving the quality of life of retired older persons. Other programmes included the provision of social safety nets, subsidies on basic services and funeral benefits. Nevertheless, further work was needed.

Families were being encouraged to care for older persons within their communities. The implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, which had been adopted by the African Union, should help to improve the quality of life of older persons. A strategy should be put in place and technical support and increased financial resources provided to African governments. Member States should also develop national plans with a gender focus for older persons, including those with disabilities.

Mr M'BAYE (Senegal) said that many older people in the African Region were not covered by social security and found themselves in great difficulty when they became ill, as was the case for 70% of older persons in Senegal. In September 2006 his Government had introduced free health care, from diagnosis to treatment, for persons of 60 years and over. Nevertheless, there were difficulties in implementation because of the people concerned and the illnesses suffered. He invited WHO and all its partners to support such initiatives.

Mr CHAOUKI (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that resolution WHA58.16, in conjunction with the Regional Committee's resolution EM/RC50/R.10, provided a framework for implementing the regional plan and the revised strategy for active, healthy ageing and old age care.

Increasingly, programmes to promote the health of older persons were being developed. There were also opportunities for authorities, institutions, nongovernmental organizations, experts and individuals to share experiences relating to ageing populations and care in old age; good examples were the Doha International Conference on Ageing (Doha, 4–6 April 2005) and the International Day of Older Persons. Active ageing programmes and the integration of geriatric health services into primary health care systems were core strategies. Many challenges remained, including raising awareness, mobilizing resources, training and motivating qualified staff, institutionalizing old age services into primary health-care systems, and integrating work on healthy ageing in related programmes. Using the life-course approach within a healthy promotion framework was the best way of ensuring active and healthy ageing.

I. Emergency preparedness and response (resolution WHA59.22)

Dr KEBELA ILUNGA (Democratic Republic of the Congo), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that, in certain regions of the world, tragic situations were caused not only by natural disasters, but also by armed conflicts, which provoked mass internal displacements of populations and movements of refugees. Member States, with partners, donors and international organizations, needed to respond rapidly to situations caused by adverse weather conditions or armed hostilities. Prompt aid enabled the suffering of communities to be alleviated, but Africa lacked early-warning systems and specialized medical centres.

He welcomed WHO's normative work to provide countries with instruments for national rapid response and health interventions in emergencies, and also its identification of four priority areas. Emphasis should be on support to community initiatives, so that local structures could take over relief work. Implementation of the three-year programme launched in 2004 to deal with emergencies had built up WHO's response capabilities. Unfortunately, the programme would end in 2007 without having achieved all its goals. Staff training had progressed but not the creation of health centres adapted to function in emergencies, or the establishment of hospital protection systems. Member States in the African Region therefore wished the Secretariat to submit to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly the mid-term evaluation of the Health Cluster approach that was being applied in certain countries. They also wished to see regional emergency funds extended to other vulnerable and less affluent regions, modelled on the South-East Asia regional fund.

Although appreciative of WHO's normative work, he argued for equal effort at operational level. WHO should continue its work to alleviate the suffering of victims of emergencies and collaborate with development agencies in order to ensure effective health interventions during the post-crisis period. WHO should be involved in the medical aspects of nutrition, water, sanitation and care provided for victims; complete the listing of national and international health-care staff qualified to respond in emergency situations; build institutional capacities, at national and international levels; monitor, through the regional offices, implementation of the provisions of resolution WHA59.22; and assist in developing national programmes.

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that in the Region natural disasters included earthquakes, landslides and floods. The recent conflict in Lebanon, with nearly one million internally displaced persons, had demonstrated the importance of health care. Cluster bombs and restricted access of the health workforce in southern Lebanon posed an immediate threat to public health and safety. Much work lay ahead to ensure that the health infrastructure was prepared for future emergencies.

Security, shelter, food, water and health were all essential in an emergency. Building national and local capacity would ensure that methods of coping were developed and sustained. It was important to invest more in disaster preparedness and risk reduction measures. Immediate steps could be taken to mitigate the impact of some disasters on the health sector: for example, making major hospitals resilient to disasters. Lessons from previous natural disasters and their impact could be applied in order to assess the risks and ensure best practices. The Organization and donor countries should ensure that technical and financial resources were made available in order to develop capacities for risk reduction and emergency response.

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) welcomed WHO's engagement in the humanitarian reform process and its leadership of the Global Health Cluster. His country sought to ensure better harmonization of health standards and encouraged WHO to work further with UNICEF in order to promote common standards in health and nutrition. The Health and Nutrition Tracking Service could improve the performance of humanitarian activities and he looked forward to its continued implementation. He was interested in the applicability of the Safe Hospitals Initiative, in particular with regard to Africa, and the indicators that would be used to measure hospital safety. He encouraged the Secretariat to ensure clear lines of responsibility between headquarters and regional offices in order to establish best practices for emergency preparedness and response.

Dr MAZHANI (Botswana) welcomed the initiatives aimed at placing more emphasis on risk reduction. His Government recognized the need to make measures for disaster preparedness and response an integral part of its development agenda. It had adopted a sectoral approach in planning under the auspices of the National Disaster Management Committee; a national multisectoral plan for disaster management had been developed.

Botswana had been facing several disasters, including droughts, floods, malaria epidemics, animal diseases and an HIV/AIDS epidemic, but it had allocated funds and other resources to respond to them. It had strengthened epidemiological monitoring of communicable diseases, which would facilitate rapid detection and reporting of outbreaks and a proactive response. He commended WHO's guidance on response to disasters worldwide.

Ms HELA (South Africa) said that her country's capacities for disaster management had increased. Nevertheless, there was still concern that no mechanism coordinated Member States' responses during disasters. WHO should play a leading role and act as the focal point for all health-related humanitarian actions. It should work with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Member States too should play a key role in that work.

Ms MULLER (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, said that Red Cross and Red Crescent societies were on the front line when emergencies arose. Preparedness for their essential work at local level was supported by the Federation through emergency response teams, technical guidance and community tools. Pandemic preparedness brought home the limitations of health systems and the need to integrate civil society into those systems. Some issues were becoming more serious because of extreme weather events and conditions, population growth, urbanization and ageing, whose humanitarian consequences would be discussed at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (Geneva, 26–30 November 2007). Part of that discussion would enable those concerned with public health to consider the importance of strengthening the community base, including the volunteer component. The brain drain of health professionals from developing countries and a widening service gap were all the more challenging in the most vulnerable countries. Governments and international organizations had to show respect for volunteers and provide an environment for volunteerism in emergency preparedness and response.

(For continuation of the discussion, see summary record of the eighth meeting, section 2.)

The meeting rose at 17:30.

EIGHTH MEETING

Tuesday, 22 May 2007, at 10:00

Chairman: Mr T. ZELTNER (Switzerland)

1. THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE B (Document A60/60)

Mr AL-FAKHERI (Saudi Arabia), Rapporteur, read out the draft third report of Committee B.

The report was adopted.¹

2. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Progress reports on technical and health matters: Item 12.21 of the Agenda (Document A60/28)
(continued from the seventh meeting)

J. Reducing global measles mortality

Dr SUGIURA (Japan) stated that his country had established a collaborative partnership with China and the Republic of Korea on infectious diseases research and control in 2006; in addition, it was engaged in bilateral cooperation with China on vaccine-preventable diseases, including measles and poliomyelitis; and with Viet Nam on measles vaccine production, in order to ensure a stable supply of vaccine. His country remained committed to the elimination of measles in the Western Pacific Region and welcomed the progress of the measles programme; however, he was concerned about the disposal of used syringes.

Dr SADRIZADEH (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that routine immunization coverage was still low in some countries; such campaigns were important to maintain the successes already achieved. In 1997, the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean had adopted a resolution to eliminate measles by 2010,² and measles mortality had declined; however, it would be challenging to sustain the high population-based immunity required to achieve that goal, particularly in countries with low routine vaccination coverage. Those countries required periodic catch-up immunization campaigns. Adopting a global target of reducing measles mortality by 90% by 2010 would secure the continued commitment of countries and of the partners providing financial and technical support. That would contribute to achieving the regional target of eliminating measles by 2010 and to the Millennium Development Goal of reducing by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five by 2015. He urged Member States to call for a resolution on reducing measles mortality by 90% by 2010.

¹ See page 314.

² Resolution EM/RC44/R.6.

Dr SÁ NOGUEIRA (Guinea-Bissau), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, highlighted the considerable progress made: the routine immunization coverage rate at regional level had risen to 75% in 2006, while the mortality rate at the end of 2005 had fallen by 75% compared with five years earlier – well in excess of the projected 50% reduction. However, mass vaccination campaigns had not prevented outbreaks of measles, even in those countries with high coverage. The main challenges were to maintain those achievements and to improve rates of routine immunization coverage under the Extended Programme on Immunization, in order to reduce measles incidence to a minimum. Existing levels of financing needed to be maintained in order to ensure continued immunization activities. Although the International Finance Facility for Immunization was providing financial support for 2007–2008, financing might be considerably lower after that period. Countries should work towards mobilizing resources internally in order to ensure continued funding of measles immunization. That would enable the regional strategic plan to be implemented until its end date of 2009 and the regional goal of a 90% reduction in measles mortality compared with 2000 to be reached by that date. Regional monitoring of measles had improved, but the system depended on the infrastructure for monitoring poliomyelitis and acute flaccid paralysis, and funding needed to be preserved in order to maintain the gains made in the fight against measles. He requested the Health Assembly to look at ways of maintaining financing levels, in order to reduce global measles mortality rates and safeguard the achievements of the previous five years.

Dr PHUSIT PRAKONGSAI (Thailand) applauded the progress made, but recalled that the number of children who had died from measles in 2005 was still high and measles vaccination coverage low. He supported the new goal of reducing global measles mortality by 90% by 2010 as compared to the baseline of 2000. Ensuring that at least 90% of each birth cohort was vaccinated against measles was not easy for developing countries; neither was ensuring strong political commitment from governments of countries with high disease burdens. In the South-East Asia Region, some 12.6 million children had not been vaccinated against measles in 2005, and a clear strategy to improve measles immunization coverage in that Region was urgently needed.

Dr DEMIRALP (Turkey) said that it was important to build on the progress reported and reduce measles mortality by 90% by 2010. Political commitment at country level to providing better access to routine childhood immunization should be sustained, intensified surveillance extended to all priority countries, and technical and financial support from partners continued.

In line with the European Region's goal, Turkey was working towards the elimination of measles by 2010. Between 2003 and 2005, all children aged nine months to 14 years had received a supplementary vaccination, whether they had been previously vaccinated or not; 96% immunization coverage had been achieved. Case-based and laboratory-confirmed surveillance had been launched, and the number of measles cases had decreased to 34 in 2006 from almost 9000 in 2004.

Dr SULEIMAN (Oman) thanked the Secretariat for its support to developing countries in reducing measles mortality and morbidity rates. As it was not possible to achieve 100% immunization coverage from one series of immunizations, he asked whether the pattern of elimination might be altered in order to cover two doses rather than one, with the proviso that countries first implemented the strategy for immunization catch-up, followed by the maintenance and follow-up strategies. Total immunization would then be higher, with coverage from the first dose at 85% to 90% and from the second dose at 100%.

Dr MTONGA (Zambia) said that the Zambian immunization programme, aimed at improving the availability, access and delivery of good-quality health-care services, was recognized for its high level of coverage. The Expanded Programme on Immunization aimed to achieve high coverage by immunizing children against vaccine-preventable communicable diseases, including tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, measles and diphtheria. Zambia appreciated the support given by the GAVI Alliance, and had achieved more than 95% measles vaccination coverage by means of a strategy aimed at

reaching every district. The remaining challenge was to strengthen health systems for vaccine delivery. Zambia supported the global strategy for elimination of measles.

Dr DAHL-REGIS (Bahamas) said that the Caribbean countries welcomed the progress made in reducing measles mortality. Gratitude was due to all partners in the global initiative, which was the best investment for achieving Millennium Development Goal 4. She supported the proposal to adopt a resolution setting a target of a 90% reduction in measles mortality by 2010. The region had become measles-free and that could set an example for the world.

Mr ROY (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), speaking at the invitation of the CHAIRMAN, welcomed the continuing successes of the Measles Initiative globally, and in Africa in particular. The partnership with WHO, UNICEF and other organizations had led to the setting up of the Measles Initiative in 2000. Donor support had made possible a series of measles catch-up immunization programmes – essential for sustained mortality reduction. As in the case of the eradication of poliomyelitis and smallpox, civil society had demonstrated its powers of advocacy, fund-raising and provision of human resources in order to back up health delivery. Other disease-control interventions should be based on similar partnerships in innovative and cost-effective ways. The Measles Initiative had benefited other disease control programmes by, for example, integrating vitamin A supplementation, de-worming medicine or poliomyelitis vaccination into its interventions. With continuing support, the remarkable progress made by the Measles Initiative partnership and health ministries would be continued until 2010 and possibly 2015. The goal of a 90% reduction in measles mortality by 2010 was achievable. A strong resolution by the Health Assembly to that end would be welcomed by donors and other partners.

The Federation's many volunteers were ready to support community-level education and behaviour change, which were essential to high vaccination coverage and best delivered through a network of community volunteers. If all partners worked together for humanity, a huge contribution could be made to achievement of the Millennium Development Goal of reducing child mortality.

Dr SINGAY (Bhutan) said that Bhutan remained committed to eliminating measles by 2010, a goal it had almost reached; however, it needed WHO's help to strengthen surveillance and the necessary laboratory facilities. He supported WHO's strategy to eliminate the disease.

Ms MAFUBELU (Assistant Director-General) congratulated Member States for their outstanding achievement in reducing global measles mortality. Indeed, the African Region had exceeded the target by reducing mortality by 75%. WHO welcomed the support it had received in the Measles Initiative partnership and looked forward to working with all partners towards the next goal, a reduction of 90% in measles mortality by 2010 which would be attained if the present trend continued and if Africa continued to lead the way; indeed, a 100% reduction by 2010 might be possible. She had taken note of the desire of some Member States for a resolution on the goal of 90% reduction by 2010. In reply to the delegate of Japan, she said that it was the policy of WHO and UNICEF to supply disposable syringes for each vaccination dose. The Secretariat provided technical assistance to ensure environmentally friendly disposal. She assured the delegate of Thailand that the South-East Asia Region was covered in the second phase of the Measles Initiative; planning had started in some countries with good progress being made, and work was also being done on an original approach to facilitate attainment of a 90% reduction in that Region by 2010.

K. Health Metrics Network

Dr FAÏHUN (Benin), speaking on behalf of the 46 Member States of the African Region, said that health information was little used for decision-making in Africa because it was delivered late and lacked analysis. Health statistics were unreliable, owing to limited resources: decision-makers were unable to define problems, monitor progress, assess the impact of their actions or take evidence-based decisions in health policy, programme design and resource allocation.

In Africa, the production of indicators raised complex problems, requiring statistical knowledge and skills for each disease or programme. Information was demanded by funding bodies or international initiatives, thus putting further pressure on the systems. Good standardized health information was vital to the operation of health systems, and the African Region was committed to setting up a global framework of national and global partnerships in order to improve health information.

The Health Metrics Network was filling a gap. Several countries, including Benin, had started to use the Network as a tool suited to the needs of health information systems in Africa. Once stakeholders had been identified and the questionnaire completed, the problems facing a national health information system emerged clearly. Bringing together health experts and statisticians would channel investment and technical assistance into building health information systems. All parties could analyse the weaknesses of a national health information system and be directly involved in finding solutions. The normative framework for performance evaluation was clearly linked to the assessment, planning and implementation of solutions agreed by all.

The strengthening of systems required resources for the design and use of health indicators. Each country would have to mobilize partners, donors and technical agencies within a development plan that avoided duplication. However, not all development partners accepted that view in the short term. Awareness-raising would therefore continue at national level, in order to mobilize further investment in health information systems.

He fully endorsed the need to build up health information capacities through development plans; to set up or strengthen processes for the production, analysis, dissemination and use of health information; and to establish mechanisms for monitoring progress, so that such systems could adapt to national and global changes. The Health Metrics Network and its partners should resolutely support the 10 countries in the “first wave” in drawing up development plans for national health information and subsequently extend the experiment to other countries.

He endorsed the strategic approaches proposed and supported the draft resolution contained in resolution EB118.R4.

Dr PHUSIT PRAKONGSAI (Thailand) welcomed the Health Metrics Network initiative. However, the Network should be extended to bridge two gaps: first, in building capacity in order to produce policy analysts who were capable of converting the data generated by a health information system into knowledge; and second, in strengthening the weak link between knowledge and policy formulation.

Mr RAMOTSOARI (Lesotho) reported that Lesotho had been reorganizing its health management information system, with the technical assistance of Health Metrics Network partners and with financial support from development partners. The previous year’s assessment of the country’s system against the Health Metrics Network’s objective standards had yielded an average score of 60%. Further support would be required to underpin a government investment plan designed to deal with the system’s weaknesses and to continue building on the strengths identified.

Dr MAKUBALO (South Africa) stressed the importance of health information, which provided the baseline data for policy formulation, programme implementation and monitoring progress towards the attainment of health goals. South Africa agreed on the need to elaborate further the architecture of a sound health information system. Mapping and understanding such a system’s complex institutional and policy frameworks at country level would help to strengthen the activities of the Health Metrics Network, enhance statistical comparisons between countries, and contribute to the generation and sharing of knowledge.

Dr MAZHANI (Botswana) said that a weak, fragmented, understaffed and underfunded health information system undermined the capacity of developing countries such as Botswana to engage in evidence-based decision-making for health policy and to monitor progress towards national and international health targets. He therefore welcomed the potential of the Health Metrics Network. The

Director-General should support countries in the preparation of Network grant proposals and in reviewing the funding criteria so as to allow middle-income countries, such as Botswana, to benefit from assistance as well.

Mr MACPHEE (Canada) regarded the Health Metrics Network as a core element for making progress towards the overall objective of strengthening health systems. Canada's funding of health systems in Africa, Can\$ 450 million over the coming decade, would proceed in parallel with the development of baseline statistics to measure the progress made. He requested more statistical detail on the initiative and an example of success, such as one of the 40 countries that had already received grants, to serve as a model. He asked whether the goal of having the Network's framework universally accepted as the global standard for health information by 2011 remained achievable with current and forecast resources.

The CHAIRMAN said that, in the absence of further comments, he took it that the Committee noted the reports.

The Committee noted the progress reports.

Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the Intergovernmental Working Group: Item 12.20 of the Agenda (Document A60/27) (continued from the sixth meeting, section 2)

The CHAIRMAN recalled that the delegation of Brazil had proposed a draft resolution and that a drafting group had been set up. The drafting group had met the previous evening; he invited the chairman of the drafting group to report to the Committee on progress.

Dr SHANGULA (Namibia), speaking as chairman of the drafting group, said that agreement had been reached on revised versions of two of the 12 preambular paragraphs and two of the four operative paragraphs. In order to maintain the momentum of the discussions, he proposed that, since Committee B was approaching the end of its work, the drafting group should meet immediately after the current meeting, rather than later in the day, as had been planned in the programme of work.

After a procedural discussion in which Ms BLACKWOOD (United States of America), Mr SCHRÖER (Germany, on behalf of the European Union), Ms PODESTA (Australia), Mr ANDREWS (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Mr BEYER (Switzerland), Dr SHANGULA (Namibia), Ms KONGSVIK (Norway), Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil) and Mr MSELEKU (South Africa) participated, the CHAIRMAN took it that the Committee could agree to the proposal for the drafting group to meet forthwith and for the Committee to finish its work later that afternoon.

It was so decided.

(For continuation of the discussion, see summary record of the ninth meeting.)

The meeting rose at 11:30.

NINTH MEETING

Tuesday, 22 May 2007, at 15:00

Chairman: Mr T. ZELTNER (Switzerland)

TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Health technologies: Item 12.19 of the Agenda (continued from the sixth meeting, section 2) (Documents EB119/2006–EB120/2007/REC/1, resolution EB120.R21, A60/26 and A60/26 Add.1)

The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the following revised draft resolution, which incorporated the proposed amendments:

Health technologies¹

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on health technologies;²

Recognizing that ~~health technologies~~ **medical devices [Netherlands]** equip health-care providers with tools that are indispensable for effective and efficient prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation and attainment of internationally agreed health-related development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

Understanding that ~~health technologies~~ **medical devices [Netherlands]** represent an economic as well as a technical challenge to the health systems of many Member States, and concerned about the waste of resources resulting from inappropriate investments in ~~health technologies~~ **medical devices [Netherlands]** that do not meet high-priority needs, are incompatible with existing infrastructures, are irrationally or incorrectly used, or do not function efficiently;

Acknowledging the need for Member States and donors to contain burgeoning costs by establishing priorities in the selection and acquisition of ~~health technologies~~ **medical devices [Netherlands]** on the basis of their impact on the burden of disease, and to ensure the effective use of resources through proper planning, assessment, acquisition and management;

Noting the needs to expand expertise in the field of ~~health technologies~~ medical devices [Netherlands],

1. URGES Member States:

(1) to collect, verify, update and exchange information on ~~health technologies~~ **medical devices [Netherlands]** as an aid to their prioritization of needs and allocation of resources;

(2) to formulate as appropriate national strategies and plans for the establishment of systems for the assessment, **planning, [Mexico]** procurement and management of ~~health~~

¹ The term “health technologies refers to the application of organized knowledge and skills in the form of devices, medicines, vaccines, procedures and systems developed to solve a health problem and improve quality of lives” [Kenya and Afghanistan].

² Document A60/26.

~~health technologies~~ **medical devices [Netherlands], in collaboration with personnel involved in health-technology assessment and biomedical engineering [Mexico];**

(3) to draw up national **or regional [Netherlands]** guidelines for good manufacturing and regulatory practices, to establish surveillance systems and other measures to ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of medical devices and **to participate in the harmonization of international good-manufacturing practices [Mexico];**

(4) to establish where necessary regional and national institutes of health technology, and to collaborate and build partnerships with health-care providers, industry, patients' associations and professional, scientific and technical organizations;

(5) **to collect information that interrelates medical devices [Netherlands] which are considered indispensable in dealing with priority public-health conditions at different levels of care and in various settings and environments, with the required infrastructure, procedures and reference tools [Afghanistan];**

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

(1) to work with interested Member States and WHO collaborating centres on the development, in a transparent and evidence-based way, of guidelines and tools, including norms, standards **and a standardized glossary of definitions [Netherlands]** relating to ~~health technologies~~ **medical devices [Netherlands];**

(2) to provide support to Member States where necessary in establishing mechanisms to assess national needs for ~~health technologies~~ **medical devices [Netherlands]** and to assure their availability and use;

(3) **to develop methodological tools to support Member States in analysing their [health technology] needs and health-system prerequisites [Afghanistan];**

(~~3~~4) to provide technical guidance and support to Member States where necessary in implementing, policies on ~~health technologies~~ **medical devices [Netherlands], in particular for priority diseases, according to different levels of care in developing countries [Thailand];**

(~~4~~5) to work jointly with other organizations of the United Nations system, international organizations, academic institutions and professional bodies in order to provide support to Member States in the prioritization, selection and use of ~~health technologies~~ **medical devices [Netherlands];**

(6) **to establish and update regularly an evidence and web-based [health technologies] database which will provide guidance on appropriate medical devices according to levels of care, setting, environment, and intended health intervention, tailored to the specific needs of country or region [Kenya];**

(7) to set up a clearing house or repository or integrated system on medical devices related to clinical procedures at different levels of care [Mexico];

(8) to provide support to Member States with vulnerable health-care systems so as to identify and put in place appropriate [health technology] that facilitates access to quality services in primary health care [Kenya];

(~~5~~9) to report on implementation of this resolution to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly.

Dr PHUSIT PRAKONGSAI (Thailand), supported by Dr SALEHI (Afghanistan), speaking on behalf of the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, said that he appreciated the definition of health technologies given in the the footnote. "Health technologies" was broader in content than the term "medical devices" proposed by the Netherlands, and should therefore be used instead throughout the draft resolution.

Ms VELÁZQUEZ BERUMEN (Mexico), recalling that Mexico had proposed the draft resolution a year earlier, suggested some amendments. The definition of health technologies should appear not in a footnote but in the first preambular paragraph, and thereafter the short term "health

technologies” should be used only in the second preambular paragraph, as a general definition, while the rest of the document should refer to “health technologies, in particular medical devices”.

The last part of paragraph 1(3) should be amended to read: “and, where appropriate, to participate in international harmonization”. In paragraph 1(4), “institutes” should be replaced by “institutions”. In paragraph 1(5), the words “which are considered indispensable” should be deleted. In the Spanish text of paragraph 2(5), formerly paragraph 2(4), the word “*consuno*” should be replaced by “*conjunto*”. In the same paragraph, “*órganos*” should be replaced by “*organismos*”. In paragraph 2(6), the words “in the form of a clearinghouse,” should be inserted after “database” and paragraph 2(7) should be deleted.

Mr HOHMAN (United States of America) expressed some concern about a definition of health technologies that would include medicines and vaccines. He asked the Secretariat to explain the source of the definition, to indicate whether the work of the department responsible for health technologies did in fact cover medicines and vaccines, and to provide a definition of medical devices.

Mr WIJNBERG (Netherlands) said that the report in document A60/26 referred to medical devices as “a major subset of health technologies”. It also stated that medical devices could be broadly defined as “diagnostic and therapeutic equipment, instruments and supplies and ancillary equipment”. His delegation had attempted to translate the content of the report into language suitable for a resolution. The original draft had addressed the broader topic of health technologies, whereas the Executive Board had wanted to restrict the topic to the product component of medical technologies.

He did not object to the preambular paragraphs using language such as “health technologies, in particular medical devices” in order to make the transition from the title of the document to its intended content, provided that the operative paragraphs referred to “medical devices” as defined in the report.

Mr MARTIN (Switzerland) supported the call by the United States of America for clarity of definition. With regard to the use of “*dispositifs*” for devices in the French text, he suggested that “*équipements*” would be more appropriate, since “*dispositifs*” could also cover procedures or software.

Dr ZUCKER (Assistant Director-General), replying to the delegate of the United States of America, said that the work of the cluster for health technology and pharmaceuticals covered medicines, but not vaccines, which were dealt with by another cluster. The phrase “health technologies, in particular medical devices” gave an overall picture of the subject area, but the cluster’s work focused on medical devices.

Dr GROTH (Essential health technologies) said that the Executive Board, at its 120th session, had convened a group of experts for a consultative meeting in order to discuss the scope and definition of health technologies. As a preparatory step, a consultant from Mexico had made a comprehensive review of the definitions of health technologies used in WHO and elsewhere. The experts had reached agreement on a definition which had been included in the text of the draft resolution at the request of the delegations of Afghanistan and Kenya.

Dr ZUCKER (Assistant Director-General) said that the Secretariat recognized that the definition given was a comprehensive one which might touch on areas that were not necessarily covered by the cluster for health technology and pharmaceuticals.

Dr DAYRIT (Secretary) said that the Mexican proposal to add the text of footnote 1 to the first preambular paragraph had been withdrawn at the request of the United States of America.

In addition to the other proposed amendments, the square brackets should be removed from “health technology” in paragraphs 2(3) and 2(8) and from “health technologies” in paragraph 2(6). Further, at the request of the United States of America, the words “which are considered indispensable in dealing” in paragraph 1(5) should be replaced by “which deal”.

Switzerland had proposed a subamendment to the amendment to paragraph 2(6) proposed by Mexico, whereby the words “in the form of” would be replaced by “to serve as”.

Lastly, the United States of America had proposed that paragraph 2(9) should be amended to indicate that implementation of the resolution would be reported through the Executive Board to the Sixty-second World Health Assembly.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

The meeting was suspended at 15:40 and resumed at 18:00.

Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the Intergovernmental Working Group: Item 12.20 of the Agenda (Document A60/27) (continued from the eighth meeting, section 2)

Dr SHANGULA (Namibia), speaking in his capacity as chairman of the drafting group, reported that the drafting group had reached agreement on the operative part of the draft resolution. The group had not yet been able to consider the preambular paragraphs, but he was confident that, if allowed to continue its discussions that evening, it would be able to agree a draft text for submission to the Committee the following morning.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should close its ninth meeting in order to allow the drafting group time to complete its work. Consideration of the agenda item would be resumed the following morning.

It was so agreed.

(For approval of the draft resolution, see summary record of the tenth meeting, section 2.)

The meeting rose at 18:10.

¹ Transmitted by the Health Assembly in the Committee’s fourth report and adopted as resolution WHA60.29.

TENTH MEETING

Wednesday, 23 May 2007, at 09:20

Chairman: Mr T. ZELTNER (Switzerland)

1. FOURTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE B (Document A60/62)

Mr BIN AL-FAKHERI (Saudi Arabia), Rapporteur, read out the draft fourth report of Committee B.

The report was adopted.¹

2. TECHNICAL AND HEALTH MATTERS: Item 12 of the Agenda (continued)

Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the Intergovernmental Working Group: Item 12.20 of the Agenda (Document A60/27) (continued from the ninth meeting)

Dr SHANGULA (Namibia), speaking in his capacity as chairman of the drafting group, reported that, after four meetings lasting a total of nearly 10 hours, the group had agreed on the following draft resolution:

The Sixtieth World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolution WHA59.24, creating an intergovernmental working group with the purpose of elaborating a draft global strategy and plan of action to provide a medium-term framework based on the recommendations of the Commission on Intellectual Property, Innovation and Public Health, and to secure, inter alia, an enhanced and sustainable basis for needs-driven, essential health research and development relevant to diseases that disproportionately affect developing countries, proposing clear objectives and priorities for research and development, and estimating funding needs in this area;

Concerned that communicable diseases account for approximately 50% of the burden of disease in developing countries, and that access to medicines, vaccines and diagnostic tools is hampered by, inter alia, inadequate health-care systems, lack of resources and prices that are beyond the reach of many in the developing world;

Conscious of the growing burden of disease and conditions that disproportionately affect developing countries, particularly those affecting women and children, including an upsurge in noncommunicable diseases;

Noting that the Doha Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health confirms that the Agreement does not and should not prevent Members from taking measures to protect public health;

Noting that intellectual property rights are an important incentive for the development of new health-care products;

¹ See page 314.

Welcoming with enthusiasm the commitment of the Director-General to the process spearheaded by the Intergovernmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property,

1. EXPRESSES appreciation to the Director-General for her commitment and encourages her to guide the process to draw up a global strategy and plan of action that will provide a medium-term framework for needs-driven essential health research and development;
2. URGES Member States to support fully and actively the Intergovernmental Working Group process and provide adequate resources to WHO;
3. REQUESTS the Director-General:
 - (1) to ensure technical and financial support to the Intergovernmental Working Group in order to facilitate completion of its tasks in time for its report to the Sixty-first World Health Assembly;
 - (2) to provide as appropriate, upon request, in collaboration with other competent international organizations, technical and policy support to countries that intend to make use of the flexibilities contained in the agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and other international agreements in order to promote access to pharmaceutical products,¹ and to implement the Doha Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health and other WTO instruments;
 - (3) to provide technical and financial support for regional consultative meetings in order to set regional priorities that will inform the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group;
 - (4) to encourage the development of proposals for health-needs driven research and development for discussion at the Intergovernmental Working Group that includes a range of incentive mechanisms [including those that separate paying for the cost of research and development from the price of medicines, vaccines, diagnostic tools and other health-care products] and a method for tailoring the optimal mix of incentives to a particular condition or product, with the objective of addressing diseases that disproportionately affect developing countries;
 - (5) to prepare background documents on each of the eight proposed elements of the plan of action, as identified by the Intergovernmental Working Group, including:
 - a matrix on ongoing activities and current gaps;
 - a matrix on current proposals referring to key stakeholders;
 - the financial implications of those proposals.

He thanked the delegations involved in producing the draft resolution for their cooperation and constructive contributions to what had not been an easy process.

The CHAIRMAN paid tribute to the leadership of the delegate of Namibia. Drawing attention to the brackets remaining in paragraph 3(4), he opened the floor for comments on the draft resolution.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America), acknowledging the substantial progress made by the drafting group, said that his delegation was ready to make considerable compromises in order to move towards a consensus, albeit with a number of editorial changes designed to improve its flow and content. First, in the second line of preambular paragraph 2, “diagnostic tools” should be changed to

¹ “Pharmaceutical product” means any patented product, or products manufactured through a patented process, of the pharmaceutical sector needed to address the public health problems (WTO General Council (30 August 2003) on Implementation of paragraph 6 of the Doha Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health).

“diagnostic kits” in order to keep the language consistent with that of the TRIPS agreement. Second, in the second line of paragraph 2, the words “continue to” should be inserted before “provide adequate resources to WHO”. Third, paragraph 3(2) should be redrafted to read as follows: “To provide, as appropriate, technical and policy assistance to Member States, at their request and in collaboration with competent international organizations, that have considered and desire to make use of the flexibilities in the TRIPS agreement to promote access to pharmaceutical products in accordance with the Doha Ministerial Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health”. Regarding footnote 1, he preferred to use the official text: “‘Pharmaceutical product’ means any patented product, or products manufactured through a patented process, of the pharmaceutical sector needed to address the public health problems as recognized in paragraph 1 of the Declaration (WT/MIN(01)/DEC/2)”. Finally, in paragraph 3(4), the entire bracketed section and the 16 words following it should be deleted, so that the paragraph would read “... a range of incentive mechanisms, with the objective of addressing diseases that disproportionately affect developing countries”.

Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil) applauded the efforts of the chairman of the drafting group and said that reopening the negotiations merely to make the draft more readable would undermine the work done to finalize such an important and complex text. Only those present throughout the previous day’s discussions were in a position to amend it. As the delegation of the United States of America had left the room during the afternoon session, he requested its delegate to withdraw his suggested amendments so as to allow the Committee to move on and approve the text as it stood.

Mr SANTA CRUZ (Chile), endorsing the comments of the delegate of Brazil, said that the amendments suggested by the delegate of the United States of America were not editorial but substantive changes that had been discussed at length the previous day.

Ms IMAI (Japan) said that the wording of the bracketed part of paragraph 3(4) was too vague and expressed support for the proposals put forward by the delegate of the United States of America.

Dr NYIKAL (Kenya), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, also considered that the amendments proposed by the delegate of the United States of America changed the substance of the text and raised points that had already been discussed during the absence of the delegation of that country from the previous day’s meeting. Members attending that meeting had worked hard to shift from entrenched positions to a common ground, and it would be unfair to have to go through the process again. Moreover, it would be tantamount to turning Committee B into a drafting group. He therefore called for the draft resolution to be adopted as presented.

Dr PONGSADHORN POKPERMDEE (Thailand) said that the draft resolution in its current form was sound; his delegation did not accept the proposed changes. He strongly supported the comments of the delegates of Brazil and Kenya.

Ms PODESTA (Australia) said that the bracketed text in paragraph 3(4) needed to be dealt with before a decision could be reached, and requested clarification on the source of the definition of pharmaceutical products presented in the footnote.

Mr SILBERSCHMIDT (Switzerland), supported by the delegates of Germany, speaking on behalf of the European Union, and Brazil, agreed that the negotiations should not be reopened fully but suggested that, in a spirit of compromise, the text in square brackets should be amended to read “also addressing the linkage between the cost of research and development and the price of medicines, vaccines, diagnostic tools and other health-care products”.

The CHAIRMAN said that there seemed to be endorsement of Switzerland's proposal.

Ms PODESTA (Australia) supported the proposal of Switzerland, and also the proposal by the United States of America to change "diagnostic tools" to "diagnostic kits", which would be consistent with the TRIPS agreement.

Ms IMAI (Japan) said that, with regard to paragraph 3(4), Japan had supported the proposal of the United States of America, but could accept that of Switzerland.

Dr DAYRIT (Secretary) confirmed that the footnote was slightly different from the one used in the resolution on malaria, and read out the latter note.

Ms PODESTA (Australia) suggested that the footnote from the resolution on malaria should be retained in the present resolution.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) asked the Secretariat to clarify what the "flexibilities in other international agreements" were.

Mr SANTA CRUZ (Chile) said that the range of flexibilities granted to a country was given not only by the TRIPS agreement but also by other multilateral or bilateral agreements. Therefore, if a country was seeking technical assistance from WHO, WIPO, or WTO, there would be no point in asking for guidance on flexibility within the TRIPS agreement if the country had already agreed to restrict it. That was what "other international agreements" meant.

Dr NYIKAL (Kenya), speaking on behalf of the African Region, supported the proposal of Switzerland for the bracketed text in paragraph 3(4), and that of Australia with regard to the footnote. Referring to the question of the delegate of the United States of America on paragraph 3(2), he said that any continued search for nuances of meaning would be tantamount to turning the entire Committee into a drafting group and inviting all delegations to return to their original national positions rather than supporting the consensus that had been reached.

Ms KONGSVIK (Norway) suggested inserting "relevant" before "international agreements".

Mr BENTO ALCÁZAR (Brazil) said that he was concerned about the course the process was taking. The day before, the group had agreed to leave one portion of text in brackets, since no decision had yet been reached on that wording. The content of the footnote had also been agreed the day before, although some minor unintentional errors of wording had been made. The redrafting process should stop there. Of course the text could be improved, but the intention had not been that the Committee should become a drafting group. The text that the group had managed to agree the previous day was an approved text, at least informally. There had been no objection to it, and the time had come to adopt it.

Dr SHANGULA (Namibia) said that in his view it was acceptable to introduce minimal changes for the sake of improving the text. The change from "tools" to "kits" was acceptable, in the interests of consistency, and the same applied to the footnote. The proposal by the delegate of Switzerland would make it possible to eliminate the brackets in paragraph 3(4). With those minor amendments, he earnestly urged that the spirit of the negotiations the day before should again prevail, and that the Committee should move on to approve the whole text.

The CHAIRMAN read out paragraph 3(4), as amended by the proposal of Switzerland, noting that that was the only amendment on which there was agreement.

Mr ABDOO (United States of America) said that his delegation dissociated itself from the consensus and reserved the right to take a different position in plenary.

Ms PODESTA (Australia) recalled that in paragraph 3(4) there had been agreement to change “diagnostic tools” to “diagnostic kits”.

Ms WISEMAN (Canada) supported by the delegate of Kenya, said that she had understood that the Swiss proposal had been to say “including also addressing the linkage ...”.

The CHAIRMAN said that in the written text before him, “including” had been deleted. However, he could see the delegate of Switzerland indicating that it could be retained. He noted that there was general agreement to change “tools” to “kits”.

The draft resolution, as amended, was approved.¹

The meeting was suspended at 10:15 and resumed at 10:20.

3. FIFTH REPORT OF COMMITTEE B (Document A60/64)

Mr BIN AL-FAKHERI (Saudi Arabia), Rapporteur, read out the draft fifth report of Committee B.

The report was adopted.²

4. CLOSURE

After the customary exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRMAN declared the work of Committee B completed.

The meeting rose at 10:20.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee’s fifth report and adopted as resolution WHA60.30.

² See page 314.

PART II

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The text of resolutions and decisions recommended in committee reports and subsequently adopted without change by the Health Assembly has been replaced by the serial number (in square brackets) under which they appear in document WHASS1/2006–WHA60/2007/REC/1. The verbatim records of plenary meetings at which these reports were approved are reproduced in document WHASS1/2006–WHA60/2007/REC/2.

COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

Report¹

[A60/53 – 15 May 2007]

The Committee on Credentials met on 15 May 2007. Delegates of the following Member States were present: Barbados, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Monaco, Mongolia, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam.

The Committee elected the following officers: Dr A.B.H. Al Ameri (United Arab Emirates) – Chairman; Mr D. Ximenes (Timor-Leste) – Vice-Chairman.

The Committee examined the credentials delivered to the Director-General in accordance with Rule 22 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly. It noted that the Secretariat had found these credentials to be in conformity with the Rules of Procedure.

The credentials of the delegates of the Member States listed at the end of this report were found to be in conformity with the Rules of Procedure as constituting formal credentials; and the Committee therefore proposes that the Health Assembly should recognize their validity.

The Committee examined notifications from the Member States listed below, which, while indicating the names of the delegates concerned, could not be considered as constituting formal credentials in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure. The Committee therefore recommends to the Health Assembly that the delegates of these Member States be provisionally seated with all rights in the Health Assembly pending the arrival of their formal credentials: Central African Republic; Ethiopia; Kyrgyzstan; Somalia; Tajikistan.

States whose credentials it was recommended should be recognized as valid (see fourth paragraph above)

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic

¹ Approved by the Health Assembly at its fifth plenary meeting.

Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

First report¹

[A60/50 – 14 May 2007]

The Committee on Nominations, consisting of delegates of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Argentina, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Panama, Qatar, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Suriname, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and Professor P.I. Garrido (Mozambique) (ex officio), met on 14 May 2007.

In accordance with Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly and respecting the practice of regional rotation that the Health Assembly has followed for many years in this regard, the Committee decided to propose to the Health Assembly the nomination of Ms J. Halton (Australia) for the Office of President of the Sixtieth World Health Assembly.

Second report¹

[A60/51 – 14 May 2007]

At its meeting held on 14 May 2007, the Committee on Nominations decided to propose to the Health Assembly, in accordance with Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, the following nominations:

Vice-Presidents of the Health Assembly: Dr T. Adhanom (Ethiopia), Dr C. Chang (Ecuador), Dr N.A. Haffadh (Bahrain), Dr J. Kiely (Ireland), Mr Kye Chun Yong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea);

¹ Approved by the Health Assembly at its first plenary meeting.

Committee A: **Chairman** – Dr R.R. Jean Louis (Madagascar);

Committee B: **Chairman** – Mr T. Zeltner (Switzerland).

Concerning the members of the General Committee to be elected under Rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, the Committee decided to nominate the delegates of the following 17 countries: Botswana, China, Cuba, France, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Latvia, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Paraguay, Russian Federation, Samoa, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, United States of America.

Third report¹

[A60/52 – 14 May 2007]

At its meeting held on 14 May 2007, the Committee on Nominations decided to propose to each of the main Committees, in accordance with Rule 25 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, the following nominations for the Offices of Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur:

Committee A: Vice-Chairmen – Dr A. Balbisi (Jordan) and Professor Eng Huot (Cambodia);
Rapporteur – Dr A. Fúnez (Honduras);²

Committee B: Vice-Chairmen – Mr D. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago) and Dr A.A. Yoosuf (Maldives);
Rapporteur – Mr H. bin M. Al-Fakheri (Saudi Arabia).

GENERAL COMMITTEE

Report³

[A60/49 – 17 May 2007]

Election of Members entitled to designate a person to serve on the Executive Board

At its meeting on 16 May 2007, the General Committee, in accordance with Rule 102 of the Rules of Procedure of the World Health Assembly, drew up the following list of 12 Members, in the English alphabetical order, to be transmitted to the Health Assembly for the purpose of the election of 12 Members to be entitled to designate a person to serve on the Executive Board: Bahamas, Indonesia,

¹ See summary records of the first meetings of Committees A and B (pages 11 and 209, respectively).

² As Dr Fúnez was unable to attend the Health Assembly, Mrs G. Bu Figueroa was elected in his place; see summary record of the second meeting of Committee A, section 1.

³ See document WHASS1/2006–WHA60/2007/REC/2, verbatim record of the eighth plenary meeting of the Health Assembly.

Malawi, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Sao Tome and Principe, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

In the General Committee's opinion these 12 Members would provide, if elected, a balanced distribution on the Board as a whole.

COMMITTEE A

First report¹

[A60/54 – 17 May 2007]

On the proposal of the Committee on Nominations,² Dr A. Balbisi (Jordan) and Professor Eng Huot (Cambodia) were elected Vice-Chairmen, and as decided by the Committee in its second meeting, Mrs G. Bu Figueroa (Honduras) was elected Rapporteur.

Committee A held its first and second meetings on 15 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Dr R.R. Jean Louis (Madagascar) and its third meeting on 16 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Dr R.R. Jean Louis (Madagascar) and Dr A. Balbisi (Jordan).

It was decided to recommend to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly the adoption of one resolution relating to the following agenda item:

- 12. Technical and health matters
 - 12.2 Smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks [WHA60.1].

Second report³

[A60/56 – 19 May 2007]

Committee A held its fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth meetings on 16, 17 and 18 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Dr R.R. Jean Louis (Madagascar).

It was decided to recommend to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly the adoption of four resolutions relating to the following agenda items:

- 11. Draft Medium-term strategic plan, including Proposed programme budget 2008–2009
 - 11.1 Draft Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013
 - Medium-term strategic plan 2008–2013 [WHA60.11]
 - 11.2 Proposed programme budget 2008–2009
 - Appropriation resolution for the financial period 2008–2009 [WHA60.12]

¹ Approved by the Health Assembly at its eighth plenary meeting.

² See third report of the Committee on Nominations, above.

³ Approved by the Health Assembly at its ninth plenary meeting.

- 12. Technical and health matters
 - 12.3 Control of leishmaniasis [WHA60.13]
 - 12.4 Poliomyelitis: mechanism for management of potential risks to eradication [WHA60.14].

Third report¹

[A60/58 – 21 May 2007]

Committee A held its ninth meeting on 19 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Dr A. Balbisi (Jordan).

It was decided to recommend to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly the adoption of one resolution relating to the following agenda item:

- 12. Technical and health matters
 - 12.9 Oral health: action plan for promotion and integrated disease prevention [WHA60.17].

Fourth report¹

[A60/59 – 22 May 2007]

Committee A held its tenth meeting on 21 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Dr R.R. Jean Louis (Madagascar).

It was decided to recommend to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly the adoption of two resolutions relating to the following agenda items:

- 12. Technical and health matters
 - 12.5 Malaria, including proposal for establishment of Malaria Day
Malaria, including proposal for establishment of World Malaria Day [WHA60.18]
 - 12.6 Tuberculosis control: progress and long-term planning [WHA60.19].

Fifth report¹

[A60/61 – 23 May 2007]

Committee A held its eleventh meeting on 21 May under the chairmanship of Dr R.R. Jean Louis (Madagascar) and its twelfth and thirteenth meetings on 22 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Dr R.R. Jean Louis (Madagascar) and Professor Eng Huot (Cambodia), respectively. During the thirteenth meeting Dr R.R. Jean Louis (Madagascar) later took the chair.

¹ Approved by the Health Assembly at its eleventh plenary meeting.

It was decided to recommend to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly the adoption of seven resolutions relating to the following agenda items:

- 12. Technical and health matters
 - 12.14 Health systems: emergency-care systems [WHA60.22]
 - 12.8 Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: implementation of the global strategy [WHA60.23]
 - 12.11 Health promotion in a globalized world [WHA60.24]
 - 12.12 Integrating gender analysis and actions into the work of WHO: draft strategy [WHA60.25]
 - 12.13 Workers' health: global plan of action [WHA60.26]
 - 12.15 Strengthening of health information systems [WHA60.27]
 - 12.1 Avian and pandemic influenza
 - Pandemic influenza preparedness: sharing of influenza viruses and access to vaccines and other benefits [WHA60.28].

Sixth report¹

[A60/63 – 24 May 2007]

Committee A held its fourteenth meeting on 23 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Dr R.R. Jean Louis (Madagascar).

It was decided to recommend to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly the adoption of one decision relating to the following agenda item:

- 12. Technical and health matters
 - 12.7 Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm [WHA60.10].

COMMITTEE B

First report²

[A60/55 – 18 May 2007]

On the proposal of the Committee on Nominations,³ Mr D. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago) and Dr A.A. Yoosuf (Maldives) were elected Vice-Chairmen, and Mr H. bin M. Al-Fakheri (Saudi Arabia) was elected Rapporteur.

¹ Approved by the Health Assembly at its ninth plenary meeting.

² Approved by the Health Assembly at its eleventh plenary meeting.

³ See third report of the Committee on Nominations, above.

Committee B held its first, second and third meetings on 16 and 17 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Mr T. Zeltner (Switzerland) and, after the election of Vice-Chairmen, under that of Mr D. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago) and Dr A.A. Yoosuf (Maldives).

It was decided to recommend to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly the adoption of nine resolutions and one decision relating to the following agenda items:

14. Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan [WHA60.2]
15. Financial matters
 - 15.1 Unaudited interim financial report on the accounts of WHO for 2006 and comments thereon made by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board [WHA60.3]
 - 15.3 Status of collection of assessed contributions, including Member States in arrears in the payment of their contributions to an extent that would justify invoking Article 7 of the Constitution [WHA60.4]
 - 15.5 Scale of assessments 2008–2009 [WHA60.5]
 - 15.6 Assessment of new Members and Associate Members
 - Assessment of new Member [WHA60.6]
 - 15.7 Appointment of the External Auditor [WHA60.7]
 - 15.8 Financial period 2006–2007: implementation of resolution WHA58.4 [WHA60.8]
 - 15.9 Amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules
 - Amendments to the Financial Regulations and Financial Rules – Introduction of International Public Sector Accounting Standards [WHA60.9]
17. Staffing matters
 - 17.2 Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules [WHA60.10]
 - 17.4 Appointment of representatives to the WHO Staff Pension Committee
 - United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund: appointment of representatives to the WHO Staff Pension Committee [WHA60.9].

Second report¹

[A60/57 – 21 May 2007]

Committee B held its fourth and fifth meetings on 18 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Mr T. Zeltner (Switzerland). During the fourth meeting Dr A.A. Yoosuf (Maldives) later took the chair *ad interim*.

It was decided to recommend to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly the adoption of two resolutions relating to the following agenda items:

12. Technical and health matters
 - 12.16 WHO's role and responsibilities in health research [WHA60.15]
 - 12.17 Progress in the rational use of medicines [WHA60.16].

¹ Approved by the Health Assembly at its eleventh plenary meeting.

Third report¹

[A60/60 – 22 May 2007]

Committee B held its sixth and seventh meetings on 21 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Mr T. Zeltner (Switzerland) and Dr A.A. Yoosuf (Maldives), respectively. During the sixth meeting Dr A.A. Yoosuf (Maldives) later took the chair.

It was decided to recommend to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly the adoption of two resolutions relating to the following agenda items:

- 12. Technical and health matters
 - 12.18 Better medicines for children [WHA60.20]
 - 12.21 Progress reports on technical and health matters
 - G. Sustaining the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders (resolution WHA58.24)
 - Sustaining the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders [WHA60.21].

Fourth report¹

[A60/62 – 23 May 2007]

Committee B held its eighth and ninth meetings on 22 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Mr T. Zeltner (Switzerland).

It was decided to recommend to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly the adoption of one resolution relating to the following agenda item:

- 12. Technical and health matters
 - 12.19 Health technologies [WHA60.29].

Fifth report¹

[A60/64 – 24 May 2007]

Committee B held its tenth meeting on 23 May 2007 under the chairmanship of Mr T. Zeltner (Switzerland).

It was decided to recommend to the Sixtieth World Health Assembly the adoption of one resolution relating to the following agenda item:

¹ Approved by the Health Assembly at its eleventh plenary meeting.

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12. Technical and health matters
- 12.20 Public health, innovation and intellectual property: progress made by the Intergovernmental Working Group
- Public health, innovation and intellectual property [WHA60.30].
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