

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING

**WHO headquarters, Geneva
Tuesday, 10 November 2020, scheduled at 10:00**

Chair: Ms E. WILDE (Australia)

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COMMITTEE B

SECOND MEETING

Tuesday, 10 November 2020, at 10:10

Chair: Ms E. WILDE (Australia)

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

1. AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT MATTERS: Item 21 of the agenda

Report of the External Auditor: Item 21.1 of the agenda (documents A73/27 and A73/39)

Report of the Internal Auditor: Item 21.2 of the agenda (documents A73/28 and A73/39)

External and internal audit recommendations: progress on implementation: Item 21.3 of the agenda (documents A73/29 and A73/39)

The CHAIR noted that document A73/39, the report of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board on its deliberations of the sub-items, contained a draft decision recommended for adoption by the Health Assembly.

The EXTERNAL AUDITOR introduced the report of the External Auditor (contained in document A73/27). The 2019 audit had covered WHO headquarters, the Global Service Centre, three regional offices, two country offices and the five entities hosted by the Organization. It had resulted in the issuance of an unmodified audit opinion indicating that the Organization's financial statements for the financial year ended 2019 were fairly presented in all material aspects and had concluded that accounting policies were applied on a consistent basis. It had found that the transactions that had come to its notice complied with the Financial Regulations and legislative authority of WHO in all significant respects. He commended the Organization's ongoing efforts and commitment to tackle the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The management tools, systems, innovations and policies adopted by the Secretariat in response to recommendations resulting from previous audits would enhance accountability, responsibility and transparency across the three levels of the Organization. The audit had brought to light several opportunities for improvement related to the processing and recording of financial transactions, Global Service Centre processes, human resources management, programme monitoring and reporting, progress management, and operations of regional and country offices. The External Auditor had accordingly made a series of recommendations to the Secretariat. Throughout his eight-year tenure as External Auditor, he had welcomed the professionalism and commitment of staff at all levels of the Organization in co-developing solutions, which had enabled the achievement of common goals. He expressed his sincere appreciation for the opportunity to contribute to the Organization's improved governance and strengthened ability to achieve its objectives and wished the incoming External Auditor every success.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND expressed concern at the decline in the operating effectiveness of internal controls in country offices, particularly those in challenging operating environments. Strengthened support should be

provided by WHO headquarters and regional offices to country operations, with a particular focus on the emergency context. She requested clarification of how the Secretariat would address the issue of overstretched country offices that were lacking an appropriate mix of skills, which had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and how Member States could provide support. She expressed support for the recommendations regarding the need for more focused efforts to strengthen internal controls at the country level, reinforce assurance activities in relation to direct financial cooperation, enhance system support and monitoring control for direct implementation activities, improve vendor management, and improve resource mobilization for key programmes that remained underfunded. The initiative on making payments using mobile phone technology in order to strengthen controls in challenging contexts was welcome. Recent allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had further underlined the need to look beyond financial implications to the systemic weakness they signalled and the potential human cost.

The representative of CHINA expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's efforts to implement external and internal audit recommendations. She supported the recommendation of the External Auditor to include output reporting in the mid-term review; further improvements should be made to monitoring arrangements among programmes. The Organization should implement outstanding external audit recommendations as soon as possible, including on resource mobilization modalities, financing for the Central Emergency Response Fund, recruitment policies, and the control framework on information technology management. She expressed concern about the control gaps in key processes within regional and country offices, as well as the decrease in the operating effectiveness of internal controls among regional and country offices. With regard to the findings of the internal audit, she urged the acceleration of the implementation of overdue audit recommendations. There was an urgent need to address the challenges concerning implementation of the WHO cybersecurity road map and the finalization of all emergency standard operating procedures, as well as issues related to financial management and regulatory compliance.

The representative of the NETHERLANDS, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, Albania, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Costa Rica, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, reiterated her deep concern about the allegations of widespread abuse by aid workers allegedly affiliated with WHO and other organizations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There must be zero tolerance for acts of, and inaction on, any occurrence of sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment and other abuses of power. She therefore welcomed the early action taken by the Secretariat, including the appointment of an independent commission to investigate the matter, and requested regular updates from the Secretariat on the commission's findings. She called on the Secretariat to introduce a range of measures, namely: improving vetting during the recruitment of employees and implementing partners, in coordination with other bodies of the United Nations system, to prevent perpetrators from being rehired; informing and raising awareness among all staff of measures to prevent, detect and respond to any form of misconduct; strengthening reporting mechanisms at all three levels of the Organization; increasing training of employees and promoting public awareness of mechanisms to report misconduct; supporting victims and survivors and providing feedback when an allegation was made; encouraging the use of the United Nations Secretary-General's online reporting system and coordinating with the national network for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse; effectively implementing survivor-centred response and support mechanisms; and ensuring confidentiality and anonymity when informing donors of allegations immediately after the Secretariat became aware of a situation. She requested further information on the budget and reforms required to realize those measures and recommended that they should be discussed by the governing bodies on an annual basis.

The representative of BRAZIL acknowledged the measures taken to implement audit recommendations on topics such as staff training, cybersecurity, compliance, risk management and ethics, and welcomed efforts to investigate cases of fraud, harassment and abuse of authority. The allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were of great concern. He therefore welcomed the swift actions taken by the Director-General through the appointment of an independent commission to establish the facts, identify and support survivors, ensure that all abuse had ceased and hold perpetrators to account, and requested regular updates on the progress made by the commission. A strong commitment to prevent and protect against sexual exploitation and abuse in all settings was crucial.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA expressed support for the draft decision and for the recommendations of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee concerning the report of the Internal Auditor. She strongly encouraged the Secretariat to expedite implementation of all outstanding audit recommendations pertaining to the lowest-rated audits and encouraged the pursuit of cost-effective solutions to address current challenges related to the substantial backlog of investigations, including staffing deficiencies within the Office of Internal Oversight Services. She noted with concern the increased number of reports of sexual exploitation and abuse, including the recent allegations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Effective policies and procedures, strengthened reporting mechanisms and access to support for survivors and those most at risk were essential. While she welcomed WHO's efforts to address reported incidents, sexual exploitation and abuse was an inherently invisible and underreported issue. In addition to training staff and non-staff on their obligations, WHO should also enhance efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse from occurring, including through comprehensive risk analysis and robust staff oversight.

The representative of GERMANY expressed concern over the effectiveness of internal controls and compliance. While the Secretariat had made substantial progress in tackling structural challenges in recent years, it was not clear whether their root causes were being addressed. The Internal Auditor, the Comptroller, the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics, the Office of the Legal Counsel, and the Evaluation Office were key in ensuring WHO's strong reputation and integrity. However, assessed contributions were insufficient to finance those core functions and the Organization's high dependence on unpredictable specified voluntary contributions put its reputation and integrity at risk. He requested clarification of the number of posts in those key functions that were currently not filled. He also asked whether the Secretariat set a gold standard compared with other international organizations with regard to the share of financing for compliance and accountability and, if not, whether it would set such a standard with the draft proposed programme budget for 2022–2023 by including a substantial increase in funding for those core functions.

The representative of JAPAN expressed concern about the allegations of widespread abuse by aid workers allegedly affiliated with WHO. She welcomed the action taken by the Secretariat, including the establishment of an independent commission, but highlighted the importance of transparent, prompt and solid action to prevent a recurrence. The investigation should clarify how the Organization could create a safe working environment and improve existing harassment countermeasures. It was necessary to take concrete action against sexual harassment at all levels of the Organization, as well as to ensure a transparent audit system.

The representative of SENEGAL, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, welcomed the achievements of the Organization outlined in the report of the External Auditor, but expressed concern about the control gaps identified, in particular those related to supervision, results monitoring and enforcement of regulations and policies in some regional and country offices, and noted the recommended corrective action to address them. She welcomed the progress made in implementing

external and internal audit recommendations but called for increased efforts by all stakeholders to implement outstanding recommendations in order to strengthen good governance.

The representative of KENYA highlighted the need to revise the human resources strategy and the Corporate Framework for Learning and Development. He would welcome the Secretariat's views on the establishment of a governance mechanism in the implementation of the WHO global mobility policy. The Secretariat should include the findings of the staff satisfaction survey in the next annual human resources report.

The representative of MEXICO said that it was important to address the challenges identified in the report of the External Auditor, such as eliminating redundant activities and revising the human resources strategy and the Corporate Framework for Learning and Development, in order to improve human resources management and ensure that WHO staff had the necessary capacities and abilities to meet future health challenges. He noted with satisfaction that the Internal Auditor had reported an improvement in the internal control environment for the Region of the Americas and that no "unsatisfactory" ratings had been reported for the Region for the second consecutive year.

The representative of NORWAY asked whether additional risk mitigation tools, such as more frequent reporting, monitoring or improved internal audit plans, had been introduced. More effective internal controls were needed, while risk management should be embedded in all levels of the Organization, with strong commitment from senior management to ensure good governance and proper structuring. Adequate resources were required, particularly for enabling functions such as the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics, and the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Calling on the Secretariat to review its overall fraud risk management system and perform a formally documented fraud risk assessment, he asked how overall responsibility for addressing corruption was being maintained within the Secretariat.

The DIRECTOR (Office of Internal Oversight Services), responding to points raised, said that the Secretariat paid close attention to the progress made in implementing audit recommendations throughout the year and reported on their status annually. As at 15 October 2020, the percentage of overdue recommendations had decreased from 13.4% to 10.4%, reflecting a level similar to that of previous years. Despite the impacts of the COVID-19 response on the implementation of audit recommendations, he encouraged WHO management to ensure their timely implementation. The high residual risk of overdue recommendations had essentially remained the same as the previous year. Cases of unsatisfactory audits were followed up with an audit the subsequent year to ensure that progress had been made. With respect to implementing a "best in class" investigations function, the findings of the independent review had recommended the appropriate level of resources required to implement that function. A recruitment process had been initiated for the top three positions in the revised function with support from senior management, although implementing the full level of resources required would take more time. He assured Member States that the Office accorded the highest priority to following up on allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, and that such allegations received appropriate attention within the structures currently in place.

The CHEF DE CABINET emphasized WHO's commitment to zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. He expressed appreciation for the support provided by Member States in the implementation of the "best in class" transformation work and confirmed that a number of measures were being put in place in terms of training and raising awareness in order to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse. He agreed that it was necessary to examine the root causes of structural and budgetary challenges. A "best in class" review that cut across all departments involved in the investigative function was already under way. The results of the review, including the potential budgetary implications, would be submitted to the Executive Board at its 148th session. Despite delays resulting from the impact of the

global COVID-19 pandemic, the Organization's leadership was fully committed to continuing its work on those matters.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Business Operations) said that efforts to implement audit recommendations were being accelerated, despite the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretariat was closely examining systemic issues, particularly high-risk issues such as direct financial cooperation and direct implementation. Most recently, global assurance activities had been implemented and harmonized across the Organization. The Secretariat was working intensively to strengthen the first and second lines of defence and functional reviews were being carried out in the Eastern Mediterranean and African Regions. He acknowledged the issues surrounding the budget and the need for flexible financing and looked forward to discussing possibilities for sustainable financing at the 148th session of the Executive Board. A number of measures had already been implemented to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse, including mandatory training for the entire WHO workforce, policies on due diligence for recruitment, and enhanced communication with all staff to ensure that they were aware of their obligations.

The CHAIR took it that the Committee agreed to approve the draft decision contained in document A73/39.

The draft decision was approved.¹

The Committee noted the reports.

2. REVIEW OF AND UPDATE ON MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD: Item 18 of the agenda (continued)

Budget matters (continued)

Programme budget 2020–2021: Item 18.1 of the agenda (documents A73/4, A73/16 Rev.1 and A73/36) (continued from the first meeting, section 2)

Financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2018–2019 and outlook on financing of the Programme budget 2020–2021: Item 18.2 of the agenda (documents A73/17 and A73/37) (continued from the first meeting, section 2)

Managerial, administrative and governance matters (continued)

Geneva buildings renovation strategy: Item 18.3 of the agenda (documents A73/4 and EB146/2020/REC/1, decision EB146(3)) (continued from the first meeting, section 2)

WHO reform: Item 18.4 of the agenda (documents A73/4, A73/18, A73/19 and EB146/2020/REC/1, decisions EB146(16) and EB146(21)) (continued from the first meeting, section 2)

¹ Decision WHA73(24).

Evaluation of the election of the Director-General of the World Health Organization: Item 18.5 of the agenda (documents A73/20, A73/20 Add.1, A73/41, A73/20 Add.2 and EB146/2020/REC/1, decision EB146(22)) (continued from the first meeting, section 2)

Data and innovation: draft global strategy on digital health: Item 18.6 of the agenda (documents A73/4, A73/4 Add.3 and EB146/2020/REC/1, decision EB146(15)) (continued from the first meeting, section 2)

Staffing matters (continued)

Human resources: annual report: Item 18.7 of the agenda (documents A73/21 and A73/40) (continued from the first meeting, section 2)

Report of the International Civil Service Commission: Item 18.8 of the agenda (document A73/4) (continued from the first meeting, section 2)

Amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules: Item 18.9 of the agenda (documents A73/22 and EB146/2020/REC/1, resolution EB146.R5) (continued from the first meeting, section 2)

The representative of MEXICO expressed support for the possibility of eliminating world health days that did not comply with the necessary criteria. He welcomed the proposal to update the list of world health days annually and to establish clear priorities for their evaluation, keeping support for observances outside the prioritized group to a minimum and redirecting the prioritization of observances to the regional level where necessary. He welcomed the decision to set the beginning of the Director-General's contract for mid-August of the year of appointment. Implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy both at WHO headquarters and in the field was crucial.

The representative of the PHILIPPINES welcomed the development of the outcome indicators of the WHO results framework for the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023. His country was piloting the impact measurement system and aimed to integrate it into the national universal health care monitoring and evaluation framework. Continued support from WHO was needed to strengthen the capacity of health information systems for monitoring and evaluation, address data gaps, reinforce the link between data and decision-making, and adopt the impact measurement system and the results framework, in accordance with the country context. The Director-General should report to the governing bodies on the global strategies and action plans that would expire within a year to help Member States consider the fulfilment of mandates and call for any necessary adjustments, thereby contributing to the meaningful measurement of impact at the country level. When considering proposals for world health days, the governing bodies should take into account their cross-cutting impact and reach.

The representative of FINLAND said that sustainable financing and strong multilateral cooperation were needed to tackle the unprecedented challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. She looked forward to receiving clarification regarding the proposal to extend the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023, to 2025, particularly with regard to programmatic work, budgetary implications and a possible revision of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023, in the light of the COVID-19 response and recovery. Noting that the COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated opportunities for digital health and innovation, she highlighted the range of digital health initiatives launched by her Government. It was crucial that WHO cooperated with all relevant partners regarding global norm-setting and discussions on data protection and ethics. Gender equality and non-discrimination must be integrated into the development of new digital technologies. She supported the recommendation of the Programme, Budget and Administration

Committee to include in future human resources reports information on measures to support the mental health and resilience of WHO staff.

The representative of AUSTRALIA expressed support for the recommendations of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee. Further updates would be appreciated on the Organization's progress in financing the Programme budget 2020–2021, particularly concerning the base programme and emergency operations and appeals segments of the budget. Efforts to ensure flexible financing, in particular to address underfunded areas, were welcome, and she looked forward to further information on prioritizing the allocation of funding to address shortfalls across the strategic priorities. When assessing budget performance at the end of the biennium, it would be crucial to measure the utilization of funds against the WHO Impact Framework for the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023. Including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other such impacts in future reporting on programme implementation would help to contextualize WHO's performance. Further information should be provided on the draft proposed programme budget for 2022–2023, including the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023, to 2025 and its related implications. With regard to the update on the results framework for the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023, WHO's commitment to filling critical data gaps and helping countries to build capacity and manage reporting requirements was encouraging. The Secretariat should support Member States to disaggregate data to enable equity and gender analysis. She looked forward to receiving further information on the output scorecard at the 148th session of the Executive Board and welcomed the establishment of a detect and respond indicator in the health emergencies protection index. Further work was required across the Organization to bridge the gender gap and fill the long-term gaps among heads of country offices. She expressed support for the draft global strategy on digital health 2020–2025.

The representative of the INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF MEDICAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, commended WHO for its work on the draft global strategy on digital health 2020–2025. Governments and institutions should support the development of evidence-based health technologies. Young people could help to develop digital technologies, which in turn could help to provide more accessible, safe and equitable high-quality health care for all. She therefore called on the Secretariat and Member States to include the contribution of young people as an additional guiding principle for the draft global strategy.

The representative of the INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICAL STUDENTS' FEDERATION, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, welcomed the draft global strategy on digital health 2020–2025 and encouraged Member States to embrace the digital transformation and provide platforms for students to develop new ideas. Digital health should be included at all levels of education for health care professionals, including pharmacists, to ensure that no one was left behind in the digital transformation of health systems.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Business Operations), responding to points raised, agreed that COVID-19 was a game changer and provided an opportunity to align expectations of the Organization with the resources available. Transparency and accountability were essential during the implementation, reporting and development of the programme budget. The Secretariat was preparing a report on sustainable financing of WHO for consideration at the 148th session of the Executive Board. With respect to the output scorecard, pilot testing of a tool had been carried out in all regions and in many country offices. The tool would be finalized based on the feedback from Member States and would ensure linkages with existing regional key performance indicators, where applicable, and take into account feedback on the feasibility of a gradual roll-out. Global and regional consultations would be convened on the draft proposed programme budget for 2022–2023, including on the practical implications of extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023, to 2025. The WHO programme budget web portal was updated every three months and provided details on financing and

implementation across the Organization, as well as in-depth analysis of WHO's financial and implementation status, projections, risks and challenges. The Secretariat would develop a strategy to address the issue of underrepresented and unrepresented Member States, which would take into consideration regional representation. The discussion on world health days could be further considered at the 148th session of the Executive Board to allow the Secretariat sufficient time to address the points raised by Member States, including the related financial implications. Activities related to observances could be monitored over the next year, especially those in categories 4–7 in document A73/19, with a view to proposing any necessary adjustments thereafter.

The REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR SOUTH-EAST ASIA said that the COVID-19 pandemic had underscored the importance of WHO's role in supporting countries to strengthen data and health information systems for preparedness, prevention, detection and response. The pandemic had also provided an opportunity to improve measurement systems through the results framework for the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023. The Member States of the Region had provided feedback on the results framework and the triple billion dashboard during various national, regional, global and online consultations, with a view to improving accountability and the measurement of results. The Member States of the Region regularly took stock of the progress made towards the triple billion targets. More work was needed in the Region to improve coverage of essential health services and reduce out-of-pocket expenditure, particularly for medicines, as part of efforts to achieve universal health coverage targets. The Region was projected to deliver more than its share of people better protected from health emergencies. Achieving the healthier population targets remained a significant challenge in her Region, largely due to the social determinants of health, rising risk factors, gaps between diagnosis and treatment, and the growing burden of noncommunicable diseases. A regional measurement framework aligned with the eight regional flagship priorities had recently been produced, and systems and tools were being developed to facilitate its implementation. Consultations were being held with Member States to develop the draft proposed programme budget for 2022–2023 in line with corporate guidance and bottom-up planning. To date, strategic consultations had been concluded with country office teams and officials from health ministries on current challenges, and a regional meeting would be convened to review the results of the strategic consultations and plan future action. The Member States of the Region were committed to delivering a programme budget that would respond to current challenges and allow countries to continue advancing towards the Region's flagship priorities and the targets under the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023, and the Sustainable Development Goals, with the commitment of, and enhanced collaboration across, the three levels of the Organization.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Data, Analytics and Delivery for Impact) thanked Member States for their cooperation in the conceptualization, development, implementation and testing of the results framework for the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023, which had underscored the mutual commitment to ensuring accountability, making a measurable impact and reporting results. The COVID-19 response had highlighted the increasing relevance of the results framework and the “triple billion” indices, in particular the universal health coverage and healthier population indices. The Secretariat was moving forward to deliver on the triple billion targets and the programme indicators through systematic delivery stocktakes, which would help to set baselines, targets and trajectories in order to accelerate progress through to 2030. The Secretariat had also begun working with Member States to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the indices and the outcome indicators. Member States' comments would be taken on board to refine existing indicators and assessing the possibility of introducing new ones so as to ensure alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals. The Secretariat would present a consolidated proposal of new indicators that covered important areas such as the mental health impact of COVID-19, cervical cancer and palliative care. In view of the importance of timely, reliable and credible data, the Secretariat had established a data governance mechanism. Further developments included: finalizing data principles and the data-sharing policy for non-emergency contexts; collaborating with the Executive Office of the Secretary-

General of the United Nations to improve data-sharing; and launching the triple billion dashboard to assess the availability of data. Data disaggregation would remain a challenge unless significant investments were made and countries were supported. The Organization would continue to support countries in strengthening data gaps, especially the least developed countries and small island developing States.

The DIRECTOR (Digital Health and Innovation) thanked Member States for their engagement in developing the draft global strategy on digital health 2020–2025 and looked forward to continuing to work with Member States to develop digital health implementation at the country, regional and global levels. The Secretariat would continue to accord high priority to the protection of health data and the promotion of the ethical use of health data and of privacy considerations in the digital health ecosystem. Work had begun on a digital health maturity matrix and guidance for the governance of digital health. The Secretariat was working to bring together different networks in collaboration with ITU, and would continue to update the glossary and report on progress every biennium. He also took note of the need to align investments to ensure maximum impact. The Secretariat would continue to work with stakeholders to maximize their engagement and with Member States to ensure an interoperable digital health ecosystem. Gender equality in digital health was essential and would form part of education and training. The Secretariat was working with the WHO Academy to ensure the availability of digital tools.

The SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Strategic Priorities) confirmed that the Secretariat would report annually to the relevant governing bodies concerning progress on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, gender equality and human rights approaches. The Secretariat was working on a broader approach, which would include diversity and inclusiveness within WHO, and would submit a clear proposal to the Executive Board on a suggested approach to deal with those issues, taking account of concerns raised by Member States. The annual letter from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) addressed to the Director-General would be reviewed and shared with Member States.

The Committee noted the reports.

The CHAIR suggested that consideration of the draft decisions and draft resolution under agenda item 18 should be deferred to allow more time to finalize the related financial implications.

It was so agreed.

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

3. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE WHO STAFF PENSION COMMITTEE: Item 19 of the agenda (document A73/23 Rev.1)

The CHAIR drew attention to the proposal to renew the mandate of Dr Alan Ludowyke (Sri Lanka) as a member of the WHO Staff Pension Committee for a three-year term until the closure of the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly in May 2023.

It was so decided.¹

The CHAIR drew attention to the proposal to appoint Dr Arthur Williams (Sierra Leone), the most senior alternate, as a member of the WHO Staff Pension Committee for the remainder of his term of office until the closure of the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly in May 2022.

The representative of EQUATORIAL GUINEA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, supported the nomination of Dr Arthur Williams of the delegation of Sierra Leone as a member of the WHO Staff Pension Committee and urged Member States to approve his appointment.

It was so decided.¹

The CHAIR drew attention to the proposal to appoint Ms Yanjmaa Binderiya (Mongolia) as an alternate member of the WHO Staff Pension Committee for the remainder of the term of office of Dr Chieko Ikeda (Japan) until the closure of the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly in May 2021.

It was so decided.¹

The CHAIR drew attention to the proposal to appoint Dr Kai Zaehle (Germany) as an alternate member of the WHO Staff Pension Committee for the remainder of the term of office of Dr Christoph Hauschild (Germany) until the closure of the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly in May 2021.

It was so decided.¹

The CHAIR drew attention to the proposal to appoint Dr Ahmed Shadoul (Sudan) as an alternate member of the WHO Staff Pension Committee for a three-year term until the closure of the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly in May 2023.

It was so decided.¹**4. COLLABORATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND WITH OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: Item 22 of the agenda (document A73/30)**

The representative of AUSTRALIA welcomed the coordinated and rapid response of the United Nations to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic had provided an opportunity to implement and test key elements of the reform of the United Nations development system. She requested further information on WHO's engagement with United Nations country teams and Resident Coordinators. Stronger collaboration was required between WHO, FAO and OIE, the importance of which had been highlighted by the pandemic. The Organization should continue to address gaps in the implementation of the United Nations reform, while organizations of the United Nations system should proactively drive collective action to improve standards, enhance accountability, strengthen capacity and incentivize cultural change. Her Government took a zero-tolerance approach to any form of harassment, discrimination or abuse. Timely and robust reporting mechanisms and action were essential, in addition to effective structures and processes to handle allegations of misconduct and prevent all forms of harassment and misconduct.

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as decision WHA73(25).

The representative of ARGENTINA welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to implement the United Nations reform but expressed concern that the introduction of the 1% coordination levy had led to a reduction in programme funding. Her Government had developed a strategic framework on cooperation with the United Nations to tackle the challenges related to sustainable development and to work towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, speaking also on behalf of Brazil, Egypt, the Gambia, Hungary and Uganda, underscored the importance of upholding the highest standards of health for women, promoting women's essential contribution to health, the strength of the family and a successful and flourishing society, and protecting the right to life. The Geneva Consensus Declaration on Promoting Women's Health and Strengthening the Family, which had already been signed by 34 countries, reflected a commitment to uphold those and other related rights.

The representative of NORWAY welcomed the Organization's active involvement in developing system-wide guidance tools for implementing the United Nations reform. However, that reform would be successful only if all organizations of the United Nations system aligned their policies, guidelines and regulations with the general reforms, particularly in relation to human resources policies, and financial regulations and rules. He asked for further information on the action taken by WHO in that regard. Funding for the United Nations Resident Coordinator system was insufficient and fragile. He would welcome WHO's feedback on its experience in implementing the 1% coordination levy on strictly earmarked contributions. The Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All, which had contributed to improving collaboration among the 12 signatory agencies at the country level, was a good example of effective system-wide collaboration.

The representative of CANADA said that the COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated the importance of ensuring a coordinated United Nations system response at all levels, and had led to new and innovative partnerships being forged among global health and development stakeholders, including with the private sector. She welcomed WHO's proactive and ongoing engagement with the United Nations system and its reform, as well the Organization's leadership and coordinating role, as exemplified through the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator and the United Nations COVID-19 Supply Chain Task Force. The success of those efforts could inform work to step up the implementation of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All, which in turn could help to strengthen collaboration and coherence in support of efforts at the country level to achieve the health-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. She requested an update on how the Global Action Plan would evolve, including with regard to supporting COVID-19 recovery efforts, as well as clarification on how the Secretariat would continue to ensure effective coordination and collaboration between WHO, United Nations partners and other relevant stakeholders in global health in driving efforts to recover from the pandemic.

The representative of BRAZIL said that further WHO collaboration within the United Nations reform framework was key to ensuring that the objectives of the United Nations were upheld. International cooperation must be driven by the priorities of the countries where projects were implemented. He encouraged WHO to further harmonize indicators, methodologies and metrics for reporting, and ensure that reporting was focused on the work relevant to the Organization. Budgetary constraints, which had been deepened by the fiscal and economic challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, should be taken into account when assessing the implications of the United Nations reform for WHO.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (WHO Office at the United Nations in New York), responding to points raised, said that the COVID-19 pandemic had proven the utility and effectiveness of the revitalized United Nations country teams and the United Nations reform in general. While the

pandemic had distracted attention from some elements of implementation of the reform, it had accelerated others. Coordination between United Nations Resident Coordinators and WHO representatives throughout the pandemic had been excellent, in part thanks to regular meetings. The Secretariat was looking at ways to better leverage Multi-Partner Trust Funds; a workshop for WHO representatives would shortly be held on how to better access and deploy those Funds. WHO and other organizations within the United Nations system had signed a mutual recognition agreement which enabled them to use each other's systems and guidelines to better implement programmes. The financial implications of the United Nations reform were being closely examined, although it was currently too early to assess the impact of the 1% coordination levy on WHO's funding. A full briefing on the United Nations funding compact would be provided at the 148th session of the Executive Board. The Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All was being used to strengthen collaboration in the multilateral system in health.

The Committee noted the report.

The meeting rose at 12:10.

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