

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE THIRD MEETING

**WHO headquarters, Geneva
Tuesday, 10 November 2020, scheduled at 14:00**

Chair: Mr A. THIAM (Mali)

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COMMITTEE B

THIRD MEETING

Tuesday, 10 November 2020, at 14:05

Chair: Mr A. THIAM (Mali)

PILLAR 3: ONE BILLION MORE PEOPLE ENJOYING BETTER HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

1. REVIEW OF AND UPDATE ON MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD: Item 15 of the agenda [transferred from Committee A]

Decade of Healthy Ageing: Item 15.1 of the agenda (documents A73/5, A73/INF./2 and EB146/2020/REC/1, decision EB146(13))

Maternal, infant and young child nutrition: Item 15.2 of the agenda (documents A73/4, A73/4 Add.2 and EB146/2020/REC/1, decision EB146(20))

Accelerating efforts on food safety: Item 15.3 of the agenda (documents A73/4 and EB146/2020/REC/1, resolution EB146.R9)

The Committee noted that, following the written silence procedure,¹ the Health Assembly had adopted the draft decision contained in EB146(13)² on the Decade of Healthy Ageing and the draft resolution contained in EB146.R9³ on strengthening efforts on food safety.

The CHAIR drew the Committee's attention to the revised draft decision contained in document A73/4 Add.2 on maternal, infant and young child nutrition. The financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat of the adoption of the revised draft decision were set out in document EB146/2020/REC/1.

The representative of MALAYSIA welcomed the Secretariat's continued efforts to support Member States in the development and implementation of food safety policies by providing guidance on food safety risk assessments, facilitating the use of new technologies and fostering knowledge exchange. Given the importance of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in the setting of international food safety standards, the Secretariat should strengthen its support for the Commission's activities. His Government had strengthened its food safety system by incorporating Codex Alimentarius standards into food safety regulations and had celebrated World Food Safety Day. He welcomed the adoption of resolution WHA73.5.

¹ Decision WHA73(7).

² On 3 August 2020, the Health Assembly adopted decision WHA73(12).

³ On 3 August 2020, the Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA73.5.

The representative of ECUADOR welcomed the information provided regarding the digital marketing of breast-milk substitutes and the related revised draft decision, and said that his Government had taken a multisectoral approach to the promotion of breastfeeding to improve health outcomes and well-being in the population. He underscored the need for data to be collected on the scope and impact of digital marketing strategies for the promotion of breast-milk substitutes, calling on the Secretariat to provide support to that end. Steps taken to protect breastfeeding and prevent malnutrition, noncommunicable diseases and communicable diseases should be understood as an investment in public health since they led to cost savings and improved development prospects. The promotion and protection of breastfeeding would contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals on nutrition and health and were basic components of quality health care.

The representative of GERMANY, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, said that the candidate countries of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, the country of the stabilization process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine aligned themselves with his statement. He welcomed the adoption of resolution WHA73.5, which had established a framework for action from WHO, including preparation for the planned United Nations Food Systems Summit in 2021, and welcomed the establishment of the Technical Advisory Group on Food Safety. The European Union and its Member States looked forward to contributing to the much-needed update of the WHO global strategy for food safety, which would help Member States to improve their underdeveloped food safety systems. The Secretariat should strengthen its capacities to support the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission since WHO was responsible for providing stable, sustainable, predictable and adequate financial support to the joint WHO-FAO scientific bodies on which it relied. The FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) and its valuable information-sharing activities should also be further developed.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had accentuated the importance of active and healthy ageing given the disproportionate effects of the disease among older adults. The measures taken to protect their physical health, such as restricting contact with others, risked harming their mental well-being and limiting their rights. Moreover, since the long-term effects of COVID-19 were still unknown, older adults must be able to access optimal and effective health care during and after the pandemic in line with resolution WHA73.1 (2020). The Secretariat should include the impact of COVID-19 in research models and recommendations to Member States on care for older adults. He endorsed the adoption of decision WHA73(12) and requested the Secretariat to report on its progress to the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly and indicate the resources and capacities needed to implement the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA welcomed the adoption of decision WHA73(12). While supporting the revised draft decision contained in document A73/4 Add.2, she said that the Secretariat should clearly define the scope and resources required to produce the comprehensive reports and guidance for Member States that had been proposed. Given the importance of a One Health approach to food safety for the protection of human health, her Government had been proud to sponsor resolution WHA73.5. Although the fight against COVID-19 was a priority, the focus on strengthening food safety should be maintained.

The representative of CHINA described measures adopted by her Government to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition, including national plans to reduce stunting in children and policies to encourage breastfeeding and the intake of nutritional supplements. WHO should play a greater role in improving maternal and infant nutrition, especially by providing more help to developing countries. She endorsed the revised draft decision and called on the Secretariat to provide more practical technical regulations and data to help her Government combat anaemia in pregnant women and infants.

The representative of SINGAPORE welcomed the four action areas highlighted in the global status report on healthy ageing. Older adults should be encouraged to take charge of their health, in particular by using technology. Age-friendly work practices and volunteering opportunities should be promoted to enable older adults to contribute to society if they wished. She encouraged Member States to discuss ways to empower caregivers, who were facing increasing strains and needed more support from their communities.

The representative of the PHILIPPINES supported the streamlining of reporting requirements as proposed in the revised draft decision. WHO should develop a core set of indicators and reporting templates on maternal, infant and young child nutrition to ensure consistency and comparability among regional and country reports. She sought guidance on ways to monitor digital marketing strategies for the promotion of breast-milk substitutes to support her Government's efforts to update its national regulations.

Member States should align their work on healthy ageing with universal health coverage policies and frameworks to increase older adults' access to health services. The development of responsive policies and programmes required better management of data on the health and socioeconomic conditions of older adults. Governments should share robust regional and national actions to bolster the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030 and trigger societal and health system transformations to improve the health and well-being of older adults. Her Government looked forward to sharing lessons learned regarding the provision of essential health services for older adults during public health emergencies.

The representative of JAPAN supported the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030 and requested the Secretariat to support Member States in the implementation of the Global strategy and action plan. Highlighting steps taken by her Government to support Japan's rapidly ageing population, she reiterated her Government's support for the recently adopted Regional Action Plan on Healthy Ageing in the Western Pacific and its willingness to share its experiences with other Member States.

Turning to food safety, she welcomed the adoption of resolution WHA73.5 and the Secretariat's efforts to update the WHO global strategy for food safety. The increase in global trade had revealed the importance of evidence-based risk assessments and international food standards. In the interests of strengthening effective food safety systems worldwide, her Government would continue to make its technical resources available and accelerate the One Health approach.

The representative of THAILAND supported the revised draft decision. Member States should increase investment to counter the promotional activities of the breast-milk substitute industry, especially digital marketing strategies, in order to meet global nutrition targets by 2030. The Secretariat should immediately provide guidance to help Member States monitor digital marketing strategies; two years would be too long to wait for a comprehensive report on the scope and impact of those strategies.

She expressed concern that a document containing frequently asked questions on breastfeeding and COVID-19 for health care workers had not been updated since 12 May 2020; furthermore, Member States were generally unaware of the document and had therefore not applied its guidance. There was a clear need to update the scientific evidence on COVID-19 transmission through breast milk as the breast-milk substitute industry had capitalized on that lack of awareness. Some civil society organizations and Governments had also unintentionally violated the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes by supplying breast-milk substitutes to mothers during the pandemic.

The representative of PERU welcomed the adoption of decision WHA73(12) and supported the vision of the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030, since the promotion of healthy ageing could help to foster well-being and gender equality and reduce inequalities. Older adults required dedicated,

comprehensive health care services to meet their specific needs through timely and effective health interventions, especially in the light of the potentially serious consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for that population group. The delivery of holistic elder care services in his country was currently being hampered by the pandemic.

He supported the revised draft decision on maternal, infant and child nutrition and described several initiatives implemented by his Government to reduce chronic child nutrition, highlighting efforts to encourage breastfeeding.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND welcomed the action taken by the Secretariat and other stakeholders to support Member States to achieve global nutrition targets. She expressed concern that the 2025 global nutrition targets and Sustainable Development Goal target 2.2 on ending malnutrition would not be met without a substantial scale-up of action; the indirect impact of the COVID-19 pandemic would further hamper those efforts. The nutrition summit planned for 2021 would therefore come at a critical time. Before the summit, the Secretariat should foster engagement between WHO country offices and governments to support the latter in preparing concrete policy and financial commitments, which could catalyse progress towards meeting the global nutrition targets.

The representative of FINLAND, speaking on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden, said that the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic had focused on the protection of vulnerable groups, and that measures taken to address the health, societal and economic impacts of the pandemic should be age-responsive. Governments and societies should adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to support healthy ageing, which hinged on the promotion of independence in daily activities, social participation, intergenerational fairness, equal opportunities and gender equality. Social interventions may be enhanced by people-centred digital interventions. The adoption of the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030 and its four action areas was timely and necessary; older adults should be able to contribute to future discussions on the matter.

The representative of AZERBAIJAN described steps taken by her Government to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition, in particular its efforts to manage marketing strategies, ensure the quality and safety of breast-milk substitutes, train health workers and educators in infant and young child nutrition and incorporate WHO strategies and best practices into its national policies.

The representative of OMAN, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, expressed support for the adoption of decision WHA73(12) on the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030. Healthy ageing required a multisectoral approach to meet the range of mental, physical, social and financial needs of older adults, a group that had long been neglected.

He welcomed the reference in the report on maternal, infant and young child nutrition to malnutrition and anaemia in mothers and children as public health concerns in some Eastern Mediterranean countries, as they could have serious consequences for pregnancies and children's lives. He expressed support for the draft decision contained in decision EB146(20). Investment should be channelled into the promotion of healthy diets, legislation should be enacted aimed at reducing salt, fat and sugar intake and the promotion of breastfeeding, and food system surveillance should be strengthened.

The Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region had supported the adoption of resolution WHA73.5 in the light of the importance of accelerating efforts on food safety. He called for the development of a regional strategy to strengthen intersectoral collaboration, enhance monitoring systems for foodborne diseases and ensure the stronger representation of Member States in his Region on international food safety bodies and networks such as the Codex Alimentarius Commission and INFOSAN.

The representative of ISRAEL welcomed the efforts made to revise the draft decision on maternal, infant and young child nutrition contained in document A73/4 Add.2, an issue of great importance to his Government.

He expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's efforts to break down the issue of healthy ageing into clear, measurable components and the issuance of guidance on long-term care services, which had helped Member States to support their older citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. The needs and preferences of older adults, including persons with disabilities, must be taken into account in public health policy development and implementation, particularly in the context of COVID-19. There was an urgent need for deeper consideration of the health impact of the gender gap among older adults and a sharper focus on the gender dimension of elder abuse. He asked how the Secretariat was addressing the lack of disaggregated data on older adults at the global level and how it was working on healthy ageing across disciplines both within the Organization and in partnership with older adults and relevant organizations.

The representative of CUBA expressed concern at the statistics on healthy ageing, in particular the finding that adults over 60 years of age would outnumber children under five years by 2050, and the challenges that ageing populations posed for all countries. She described her Government's efforts to support older adults by providing targeted health care and social interventions, and through dedicated epidemiological strategies against COVID-19. It was important to change current perspectives on healthy ageing and older adults by adapting health care strategies and creating welcoming environments. Her Government stood ready to share its experience of improving quality of life among older adults.

The representative of BANGLADESH supported the vision and four action areas of the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030 and called for a whole-of-society approach to their implementation. He also expressed support for the revised draft decision on maternal, infant and young child nutrition, an issue that his Government had addressed in national policies to combat childhood obesity and the inappropriate promotion of foods for infants and young children.

Food safety was an important factor in public health and socioeconomic development; his Government had therefore accelerated action to strengthen food safety. Expressing appreciation for action already taken to support Member States despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the nutrition of poorer and more vulnerable groups, he urged the Secretariat to allocate more resources to nutrition in order to assist Member States in facing those challenges.

The representative of BRAZIL reaffirmed his Government's commitment to improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition, drawing attention to its efforts to promote breastfeeding and healthy diets. He highlighted the significance of internationally agreed standards such as the Codex Alimentarius to the protection of consumer health and fair trading practices. He underlined the need for access to quality, comprehensive health services for people of all ages; and supported the implementation and promotion of the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030.

The representative of URUGUAY expressed support for the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030 and conveyed her Government's commitment to the implementation of the Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health 2016–2020. Turning to maternal, infant and young child nutrition, she supported the wording of the revised draft decision on the marketing of breast-milk substitutes and shared information about steps taken by her Government on that matter. It would be crucial to gather information on digital marketing, in particular on products included in the scope of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and initiatives targeting young children. She thanked the Secretariat for its technical support in establishing mechanisms to continuously monitor the marketing of breast-milk substitutes. She welcomed the adoption of

resolution WHA73.5 and expressed her Government's commitment to promoting food safety through multisectoral collaboration.

The representative of ZAMBIA, noting that progress in HIV/AIDS management had made it safer for mothers living with HIV to breastfeed their children, highlighted the progress made in infant nutrition in her country. However, the inappropriate promotion of foods for infants and young children constituted an emerging challenge in the fight against malnutrition and nutrition-related noncommunicable diseases in countries like hers. She therefore urged all Member States to support the revised draft decision.

The representative of SLOVAKIA said that, given the importance of maternal, infant and young child nutrition, she supported the revised draft decision. Highlighting steps taken by her Government, she thanked the WHO Regional Office for Europe for its support for Member States in her Region. Further guidance should be provided on national initiatives: to promote breastfeeding and multisectoral collaboration on child nutrition; support monitoring of the marketing of breast-milk substitutes in accordance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes; and develop policies to monitor and restrict the marketing of unhealthy foods to children.

The representative of CHILE welcomed the Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health 2016–2020 and the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030, which would encourage all relevant sectors to promote healthy ageing and better address the social determinants of health. To that end, his Government was working to adopt new legislation on healthy ageing to protect the human rights of older adults and encourage their participation in society. Healthy ageing was a pillar of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and progress would require collaboration between community, national and international stakeholders.

The representative of KENYA said that she supported the Secretariat's efforts to collect data on healthy ageing, which would prove useful in the development of evidence-based policies on long-term care. She looked forward to the publication of the baseline report for the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030. The Secretariat should help Member States to implement the WHO guidelines on integrated care for older people and provide tools for the provision of care to older adults.

She described steps taken by her Government to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had affected food security and consequently nutrition, stalling progress towards the achievement of global targets under the Sustainable Development Goals. The Secretariat should help Member States to monitor and document that impact and develop measures to mitigate it. She took note of the revised draft decision and the status report for 2020 on the marketing of breast-milk substitutes, which had revealed that countries were still failing to protect parents from misleading information. Member States should continue to support the effective implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.

The representative of the MARSHALL ISLANDS described her Government's efforts to expand the targeted delivery of essential early childhood development services despite resource and geographical constraints. Stakeholders should demonstrate their strong commitment to supporting early childhood development programmes to bridge gaps in the global health system; to that end, WHO should actively engage with all stakeholders.

The representative of the INTERNATIONAL BABY FOOD ACTION NETWORK, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, said that ending biennial reporting on the marketing of breast-milk substitutes in 2030 would generate unacceptable risks and undermine WHO's fundamental purpose. Such reporting should continue until Member States had adopted effective and independently monitored legislation to eliminate the harmful marketing of such products. The Secretariat should

continue to respect the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and advise Member States to safeguard their policy-making from inappropriate partnerships.

The representative of MEDICUS MUNDI INTERNATIONAL – NETWORK HEALTH FOR ALL, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, said that the COVID-19 pandemic had hampered progress on the global nutrition targets. The political economy of food systems had been overlooked, high-level initiatives had not driven progress and there was a risk of conflicts of interest. Reporting should continue beyond 2030. Food sovereignty, human rights and public health should not be sacrificed for food safety. Operating standards that favoured high-income countries and transnational food corporations should be addressed. He urged Member States and donors to increase their contributions to enable WHO's work with the Codex Alimentarius.

The representative of the INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF NEPHROLOGY, speaking at the invitation of the CHAIR, expressed support for decision EB146(20) since poor maternal health during pregnancy could have serious long-term effects on the child. He called on WHO to prioritize the development of policies and programmes on maternal and child nutrition and increase access to antenatal and postnatal care and education for mothers on young child nutrition.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Universal Health Coverage/Healthier Populations) thanked delegates for their support and guidance on all three agenda items discussed.

The Secretariat would consider the issues raised by Member States concerning the implementation of the Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020–2030 and would seek to obtain more disaggregated data on ageing. With regard to partnerships on healthy ageing, the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific had developed a regional action plan and the Secretariat had already transmitted WHO's decision on the Decade of Healthy Ageing to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for consideration by the United Nations General Assembly.

She noted that several speakers had highlighted the threats posed to maternal, infant and young child nutrition by stunting, wasting and COVID-19, and many had expressed a strong interest in the protection of breastfeeding and prevention of harmful digital marketing of breast-milk substitutes. The Organization would continue to work with UNICEF and other partners towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Secretariat would soon update the WHO global strategy for food safety in line with the One Health approach and in cooperation with FAO and other partners and would seek further guidance and support from Member States for that purpose.

The Committee noted the reports.

The revised draft decision on maternal, infant and young child nutrition was approved.¹

¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as decision WHA73(26).

PILLAR 4: MORE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WHO PROVIDING BETTER SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES**2. REVIEW OF AND UPDATE ON MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD: Item 18 of the agenda (continued)****Managerial, administrative and governance matters (continued)**

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 second meeting, section 2)

The CHAIR invited the Committee to approve the draft resolution contained in document A73/20 and the draft decision contained in document A73/20 Add.1 pertaining to the election of the Director-General. The financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat of the adoption of the draft resolution and draft decision were set out in document A73/20 Add.2.

The draft resolution¹ and the draft decision were approved.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 second meeting, section 2)

The CHAIR invited the Committee to approve the draft decision recommended in decision EB146(15) on data and innovation: draft global strategy on digital health. The financial and administrative implications for the Secretariat of the adoption of the draft decision were set out in document A73/4 Add.3.

The draft decision was approved.³

Staffing matters (continued)

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 second meeting, section 2)

The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolution recommended in resolution EB146.R5 on salaries of staff in ungraded positions and of the Director-General.

The draft resolution was approved.⁴

The meeting rose at 15:30.

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¹ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as resolution WHA73.6.

² Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as decision WHA73(27).

³ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as decision WHA73(28).

⁴ Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's first report and adopted as resolution WHA73.7.