World Health Organization

SEVENTY-FIFTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY **A75/A/PSR/2**
2022

COMMITTEE A

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE SECOND MEETING

Palais des Nations, Geneva
Monday, 23 May 2022, scheduled at 14:30

Chair: Dr H. NAKATANI (Japan)
Later: Dr M. ABDOOL-RICHARDS (Trinidad and Tobago)
Later: Dr H. NAKATANI (Japan)

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SECOND MEETING

Monday, 23 May 2022, at 14:35

Chair: Dr H. NAKATANI (Japan)
Later: Dr M. ABDOOL-RICHARDS (Trinidad and Tobago)
Later: Dr H. NAKATANI (Japan)

1. FIRST REPORT OF COMMITTEE A (document A75/58)

The RAPPORTEUR read out the draft first report of Committee A.

The report was adopted.[1]

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

2. PROGRAMME BUDGET 2022–2023: REVISION: Item 12 of the agenda (documents A75/6, A75/7 and A75/46)

- **General Programme of Work results framework** (documents A75/8, A75/8 Add.1, A75/53 and EB150/2022/REC/1, resolution EB150.R4)

The CHAIR drew attention to the draft resolution on the revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023, contained in document A75/46, and the draft resolution on extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025, recommended by the Executive Board in resolution EB150.R4 and revised by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board at its thirty-fifth meeting, contained in document A75/53, the financial and administrative implications of which were set out in document A75/8 Add.1.

The representative of CANADA highlighted the importance of fostering the interconnections between WHO's strategic priorities 1, 2 and 3 and expressed strong support for the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023. He welcomed the accelerated application of the WHO gender mainstreaming strategy across all initiatives and requested further information on the Organization's actions to develop systems and tools to manage the impacts of health emergencies on gender equality. The proposed inclusion of resource requirements to strengthen accountability, compliance and risk management, with a special focus on the Organization's capacity to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, was also welcome. He supported the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025 and welcomed opportunities to further review the results framework. He looked forward to meaningful, in-depth consultations with Member States on the development of the proposed programme budget for 2024–2025 over the next year.

The representative of FRANCE, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, welcomed the alignment of the proposed revision of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 with WHO's first three priority areas. The proposal to allocate additional resources to strengthen WHO's accountability, compliance and risk management functions, with a focus on enhancing prevention of and response to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, was also a welcome step. Although she supported the increased focus on the country and regional levels, she questioned why

[1] See page XX.

the need for additional resources at those levels had not been foreseen earlier. Further details were needed concerning the longer-term budgetary implications of the increases and expected investments, as well as concerning the expected increase in resources allocated to the first and third billion targets under the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. She also sought clarification as to why the reprioritization of resources was not possible within the approved Programme budget 2022–2023 and requested the Secretariat to further examine possible synergies. She welcomed the savings realized by the Secretariat but highlighted that the remaining gap between the Programme budget 2022–2023 and the resources available might result in certain parts of the budget not being implemented or having to be reprioritized. She hoped that the recommendations of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing would be adopted at the current Health Assembly in order to improve the sustainability and predictability of WHO's funding and ensure that it had the necessary capacities to implement its mandate. She expressed support for the draft resolution on extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, expressing support for the draft resolution on the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023, welcomed the importance accorded to the WHO Health Emergencies Programme and called for flexible investments to support the related core functions of WHO. She also welcomed the recognition of the interconnections between strategic priorities 1, 2 and 3, supported the general focus within pillars 1 and 3 of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 and looked forward to seeing the impact of additional investment in those areas. The proposed budget uplift to strengthen accountability, compliance and risk management, with a focus on prevention of and response to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, was also a positive step, and she supported the shift towards a victim- and survivor-centred approach, as well as efforts to reform the Organization's culture.

She expressed support for the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work to 2025. Efforts to achieve the triple billion targets and the Sustainable Development Goals must be redoubled. She also supported the proposed Member State consultations on the extension during the intersessional period and the proposal to submit the results framework for consideration by the Executive Board at its 152nd session, on the understanding that the development of the proposed programme budget for 2024–2025 would be based on the Thirteenth General Programme of Work.

The representative of LEBANON, noting that efforts to achieve most of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 were considerably off track, supported the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025 and welcomed continued efforts to achieve the triple billion targets despite the challenges ahead. His Government welcomed the five proposed areas of focus and was committed to their achievement at the national level. Emphasizing the crucial role played by young people in science, research innovation, data and technology, he highlighted the importance of supporting young students, innovators and entrepreneurs.

The representative of MADAGASCAR, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, said that the COVID-19 pandemic had hampered efforts to achieve the triple billion targets and called for increased support at the country level to ensure a timely recovery. He supported the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023 and the 14% budget increase, which would help to strengthen emergency preparedness and response in priority areas and enhance support at the country level. Increased resources should be allocated to low- and middle-income countries, whose already fragile health systems had been disrupted by the pandemic. Continued support should be provided to enable the Member States of the Region to tackle common challenges and reduce the specific vulnerabilities they faced. He encouraged all Member States to contribute to WHO's funding and to the effective implementation of the revised Programme budget 2022–2023.

The representative of SWEDEN expressed support for the draft resolution on the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023. The proposed additional resources were necessary in order to strengthen global health security and support Member States in their capacity-building efforts. Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic must be incorporated into WHO's business model and into its technical and normative work. She welcomed the proposal to strengthen the WHO Health Emergencies Programme and the focus on country and regional offices. However, adequate resources

must be ensured at the headquarters level to hire and retain highly skilled professionals. She expressed particular concern about the long-term resourcing of the Science Division and the antimicrobial resistance team at headquarters and requested the Secretariat to report on the long-term needs for technical and normative guidance from those two units. She welcomed the consensus reached by the Working Group on Sustainable Financing, which would contribute to the long-term and improved financing of WHO and represented a huge step forward. She supported the proposed additional resources to address sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and looked forward to continued discussions at governing bodies sessions on enforcing an Organization-wide zero-tolerance approach. The recent allegations of racism and professional misconduct in the Western Pacific Region must be addressed, and the mental health and well-being of staff promoted and ensured.

The representative of FIJI said that Member States should reduce their reliance on donors and reinforce their commitment to achieving strategic priority 3. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the reprioritization of donor funding, including through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility, must be taken into account in that process. The disparity in financing at the regional level highlighted the deep inequalities that existed. The proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023 should be centred on universal health coverage and building safe and equitable societies by addressing the determinants of health. Health emergencies should be a central focus of the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025. Further targeted support was imperative at the country level, including in small island developing States, in order to ensure a resilient recovery and address the unequal and uneven progress towards the achievement of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals.

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION welcomed efforts to improve the efficiency and transparency of the Organization's activities and supported continued reporting on that process. In the future, such reporting should include concrete proposals on the reallocation of resources to support development and an assessment of the significant increase in WHO's contributions to the United Nations Resident Coordinator system. In addition to assessing efficiency, it was important to reduce staff numbers, vacant posts and the hiring of consultants and avoid the duplication of staff functions. Reports should be prepared on expected savings for current and future budget cycles in order to increase the predictability of WHO's funding. The planned allocation of the requested additional resources was not sufficiently detailed and needed to be broken down by type of expenditure to enable Member States to more adequately assess the Organization's additional budgetary requirements. He expressed support for the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025 and the proposed consultations with Member States on its content, which would allow for a detailed discussion of the future of the Organization and enable the Secretariat to plan its resources.

The representative of BANGLADESH expressed support for the draft resolution on the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023 and welcomed the proposed increase in the base budget segment. The proposal to authorize the Director-General to make budget transfers between the four strategic priorities could prove to be a useful tool during health emergencies. He also supported the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025 and welcomed the work on the WHO transformation and the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group methodology. Developing countries required additional support for health systems strengthening and capacity-building, particularly in terms of data capacity. The revised Programme budget 2022–2023 should include a specific allocation for health emergency preparedness, and varying country contexts should be taken into account in the allocation of resources. He called on the Secretariat to explore possibilities for adopting a more robust and situation-responsive budgetary mechanism in line with United Nations standards.

The representative of PARAGUAY, noting the significant improvement in the Organization's operational efficiencies, requested further information on the methodology used to estimate the cost savings and whether they were expressed as nominal values and had been compared against a specific financial period. She pointed out that the recommendation of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing to increase Member States' assessed contributions was based on the approved Programme

budget 2022–2023 rather than the proposed revision. If approved, the proposed increase in the base budget segment would therefore result in an even greater absolute increase in Member States' assessed contributions. Clarification was therefore needed regarding the proposed percentage increases in assess contributions. It was important to take into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in efforts to achieve global health equity.

The representative of MALAYSIA welcomed the proposed budget increase under strategic priority 2, which would enable WHO to strengthen its capacity to prepare for and respond to health emergencies. She welcomed the proposed allocation of resources to strengthen the Organization's accountability and business integrity with regard to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. At the national level, the guidance and technical support provided by the country and regional offices were welcome. She expressed support for the draft resolution on the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025, in particular the proposed areas of focus, and looked forward to the development of additional public health indicators, including on mental health and behavioural insights.

The representative of MALDIVES said that the COVID-19 pandemic had underscored the need to streamline national health sector strategic planning and health security in order to improve efficiencies using the limited resources available. Efficiency gains should not be considered exclusively from a monetary savings perspective. A range of initiatives were needed to maximize efficiencies through the optimization and automation of business processes. She welcomed the inclusion of "greening" initiatives and highlighted the need to streamline procurement practices with those of other organizations of the United Nations system and to use new and improved technologies to ensure that the Organization continued to deliver results and achieve its mission. She supported the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025.

The representative of the UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA said that it was the duty of Member States to ensure that the required resources were mobilized to achieve the goals set out in the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on essential health services. Resources must be sufficiently flexible and sustainable to ensure close alignment with planning and budgeting under the oversight of the WHO governing bodies. Her Government was committed to working with the Secretariat in raising voluntary contributions from bilateral and multilateral partners at the country level and exploring options to broaden the financing base of WHO programmes. She supported the recommendations of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing, in particular on increasing assessed contributions to cover at least 50% of the base segment of the Programme budget 2022–2023, but said that WHO should aim to achieve that increase by the biennium 2030–2031. She also welcomed the proposal to allocate additional resources to strengthen WHO's accountability, compliance and risk management functions. More flexible funding and unearmarked voluntary contributions were necessary, in addition to efforts to report on the benefits derived from each dollar invested. Extensive consultations should be held with Member States to ensure the effective investment of additional resources.

The representative of VIET NAM welcomed the proposed budget increase, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Secretariat's efforts to increase efficiency savings. She supported the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025 and thanked the Secretariat and international development partners for their technical and financial support in strengthening her country's health system.

The representative of the PHILIPPINES supported the draft resolution on extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025 and the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023, which, among other things, would help to improve progress towards universal health coverage and strengthen WHO's role in the global health architecture. The severe inequities in financing across regions must be addressed. He welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to fulfil the commitments outlined in the approved Programme budget 2022–2023 despite the demands of the COVID-19 response, and to learn lessons from the pandemic to better inform current and future

programme budgets. The extended Thirteenth General Programme of Work should include a focus on expanding the health emergencies protection index's indicators and methodologies for smaller-scale events in order to build local capacity to prevent outbreaks. Lastly, the Secretariat should intensify its support at the country level to enable countries to make a resilient recovery and in order to tackle the uneven progress in achieving the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The representative of BRAZIL welcomed the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023 and appreciated the related Member State consultations. To improve the current budgeting methodology, a structured framework should be developed to ensure regular dialogue between the Secretariat and Member States at the headquarters and regional levels, including regular financial and budgetary updates. Further clarity on key inputs and activities was also needed. Not only would support for the budget prioritization process be strengthened as a result, but the oversight role of the governing bodies would also be facilitated. The workplan must be aligned with the outcomes of ongoing discussions with Member States, without pre-empting discussions on programmatic initiatives. A higher proportion of the base budget segment must be financed sustainably, which would require discipline from both Member States and the Secretariat and further advances on cost efficiencies and savings. Moreover, the size of the base segment could benefit from a re-evaluation, particularly with regard to the inclusion of specific initiatives. He supported the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025 but underlined that any substantive revisions must be comprehensively discussed with Member States. Universal health coverage should remain the guiding principle of WHO's work until 2030.

The representative of NAMIBIA supported the draft resolution on the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023 but emphasized that any revisions should be aligned with WHO's principles on strategic budget space allocation to ensure that resources were not allocated away from countries and regions with the greatest need. He also expressed support for the proposal to extend the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025, which would accelerate progress towards achieving the health-related Sustainable Development Goals and the triple billion targets.

The representative of MEXICO said that the programme budget should be allocated to each strategic priority through the reprioritization of the resources available rather than through a budget increase, which would be difficult for Member States to implement in the light of the current global economic context. The programme budget should be developed based on an analysis of the results achieved and the effectiveness of the actions implemented using allocated resources, and financing gaps should be identified by programme type. Furthermore, information should be provided on the methodology used to determine the long-term resources required for each strategic priority. In that context, he welcomed the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group methodology. It was essential to strengthen the linkages between the implementation of activities, the results achieved and operational efficiency and transparency and to continually assess performance and accountability. In addition to the reallocation of resources, continued efforts to improve coordination and communication across priority areas and the three levels of the Organization were necessary in order to maximize the effective use of resources, generate savings, avoid duplication and deliver results.

The representative of JAPAN supported the proposal to continue consultations with Member States on extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025 and to submit the outcome of those consultations to the Executive Board at its 152nd session, as well as to continue working on the development of the proposed programme budget for 2024–2025 based on the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, as extended. Those actions should go hand in hand with efforts to increase operational efficiencies. A more efficient budget development mechanism was needed, and Member States' engagement in the budget development process needed to be enhanced. The investigation into allegations of misconduct in the Western Pacific Region should be completed in a thorough, fair and timely manner and without disruption.

The representative of CHINA highlighted the need for more flexible and predictable voluntary contributions. Programme budget development should be based on the resources available and WHO's

core functions and activities, while seeking to minimize budget increases. He welcomed efforts to strengthen the capacity of country and regional offices, including by providing them with the necessary financial support. The process of identifying the 30 countries that required intensified support should be transparent and fair. The proposed consultations with Member States should be closely linked with the budget development process and clearer information should be provided on that process, including on procedures to tailor the budget to changing goals. Regular and inclusive consultations were necessary to ensure that Member States' views were taken on board.

The representative of AUSTRALIA welcomed the intersessional Member State consultations that had informed the revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023 and expressed support for the proposed budget uplift. He noted that the revision reflected the need to strengthen WHO's COVID-19 preparedness and response capacities, and the increasing expectations of Member States in this regard. The proposal to allocate additional resources to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment was critical to strengthen WHO's accountability and transparency; a sustained impact across WHO's accountability functions must be ensured. Efforts to strengthen delivery capacity in country offices were also essential in order to reinforce WHO's impact on the ground. The proposed budget revision had highlighted the importance of providing WHO with adequate, flexible and sustainable funding to enable it to deliver its critical work and illustrated the growing need for sound budgetary and governance reform. He welcomed efforts to improve the Organization's operational efficiencies, including the consideration of efficiency gains beyond monetary savings. Correcting the overreliance on voluntary contributions would help to ensure that staff skills were used more efficiently.

The representative of INDIA said that a framework was needed to evaluate the support provided to Member States based on country context. The Secretariat must be driven by the requirements and aspirations of Member States. A mechanism should be created to ensure regular dialogue with Member States on financial resources and their use at a more granular level. In addition, the Secretariat's investments in health at the country level should be aligned with country priorities. A quarterly review mechanism was also needed between country offices and Member States to monitor programme implementation and the efficient use of funds. To enhance transparency, real-time digital access to information on the implementation status and expenditure of WHO's ongoing programmes was needed. The Secretariat must engage meaningfully with Member States on the collection of data instead of relying on unverified sources and must ensure that no data provided by Member States were shared with third parties, including non-State actors, without the permission of the Member State concerned. WHO's procurement practices should be diversified to incorporate developing countries, including with regard to the manufacturing of medical countermeasures.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA supported the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025. Concerning the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023, the additional information provided on outcome 4.2 on strengthening WHO's accountability, compliance and risk management functions was welcome. However, budget documents must be provided in a more timely manner to allow Member States sufficient time to review and consider the contents. She supported the draft resolution on the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023 and called on the Secretariat to fulfil Member States' requests with regard to regular reporting, monitoring and performance assessment.

The representative of SOUTH AFRICA said that a radical change was needed in the way in which WHO was financed in order to enhance preparedness for current and future threats. She urged Member States to take bold steps and adopt recommendations that would improve the financing of the Organization and place it on a more stable footing as the leading United Nations agency for global health. It would be useful to obtain additional information on how the reported cost savings had been utilized and allocated, particularly with regard to underserved areas, in order to accelerate the achievement of results related to the Thirteenth General Programme of Work.

The representative of PANAMA welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to improve cost savings and operational efficiencies but requested further information on their sustainability and on whether

additional areas had been identified or new strategies or initiatives were envisaged to further enhance savings and efficiencies. She supported the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025, which was necessary in order to get back on track towards the achievement of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives and targets of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work. Action must be taken to tackle inequities and inequalities. The conclusions of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing reflected the diverse views of Member States and the consensus reached. However, the governance reform deliverables must be clearly defined. In addition, the financing of WHO must be sustainable and transparent, and Member States should commit to increasing their assessed contributions to 50% of the base budget segment and reduce reliance on extra-budgetary contributions.

The representative of TUNISIA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, welcomed the inclusive and transparent process for the revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023 and the strategic investment approach, which would significantly enhance delivery capacity at the country level and WHO's overall capacity to fulfil its mandate. The proposed budget increase for strategic priority 2 was necessary in view of current global challenges and would benefit the countries in the Region that were facing large-scale humanitarian emergencies. However, additional investment in strategic priority 3 was needed to address the underlying causes of ill health. WHO's current funding model was not viable, and additional investments and modalities must be explored. He therefore supported the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023. Continued efforts to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness were a positive step and he looked forward to further updates in that regard, particularly on improvements to the methodology used to report on efficiency savings. Lastly, he supported the proposed extension of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025, noting that the five proposed areas of focus would help Member States to build back better.

The DIRECTOR (Planning, Resource Coordination and Performance Monitoring) said that Member States' suggestions on improving the presentation of budget information would be considered by the proposed Member State task group on strengthening WHO budgetary, programmatic and financing governance. With regard to the timeliness of the report on the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023, the short amount of time available to amend the document between the end of the 150th session of the Executive Board in January 2022 and the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly, together with the need to discuss the document at the regional level and hold consultations with Member States, had limited the time frame for preparing and submitting the document, especially in the light of the extensive changes required. Nevertheless, ways of improving that process would be considered, including by the proposed Member State task group. The Secretariat was working on the first draft of the proposed programme budget for 2024–2025, which would be made available to the regional committees by early June 2022.

Responding to comments by the representative of Canada on health emergencies and gender equality, he said that the Secretariat had established the WHO Health Emergencies Programme Gender Working Group, which was working on a strategy that would be published in the coming weeks. In response to a question from the representative of France on why the need for additional resources had not been foreseen earlier, he explained that the financial implications of resolution WHA74.7 (2021) on strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies had not included the costings for the first and third billion targets under the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 owing to the short amount of time available but had indicated that they would be submitted for consideration at a later date. With regard to the longer-term impact of the proposed budget increase, most of the increase related to strengthening capacities at the country level, namely by scaling up human resources, and would therefore need to be carried over to subsequent bienniums. Although the possibility of reprioritizing resources had been examined, most of the proposed investments were related to scaling up capacities at the country level and there was therefore very limited scope for reprioritization, especially as the current budget biennium had only recently begun.

The Science Division and antimicrobial resistance team were reliant on flexible corporate funding, and no additional funding had yet been made available. For that reason, strengthening and creating programmes on those areas was challenging. Implementation of the recommendations of the Working

Group on Sustainable Financing would, however, result in a step change in the financing of programmes and initiatives that relied on flexible funding. In terms of efficiency savings, the reported values were nominal, and 2018 had been selected as the base year as it coincided with the start of the WHO transformation. Cost and time savings had been examined, along with improvements in effectiveness, providing both a qualitative and a quantitative perspective. The proposed budget increase would not impact the proposed increase in Member States' assessed contributions, which had been set at 50% of the approved Programme budget 2022–2023 and was fixed in absolute terms.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Data, Analytics and Delivery) thanked Member States for their support for the proposal to extend the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025. The two-year extension would provide a window of opportunity to enhance effectiveness and efficiency and allow the Secretariat to strengthen the support provided to Member States. It would also allow the Secretariat to generate the evidence needed to guide and implement public policies and programmes at an accelerated pace.

With regard to the measurement system for tracking progress towards the triple billion targets and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals, the Secretariat was guided by the results framework, established in consultation with Member States, which was a vital mechanism for monitoring progress, identifying roadblocks and delivering a measurable impact. The Secretariat would continue to consult with Member States regarding any proposed fine-tuning of that measurement system. There were currently no proposed changes to the results framework. The collective goal was to use a data-driven approach to deliver results at the country level and to prioritize and focus actions to ensure the greatest and quickest impact. The Secretariat would continue to consult with Member States and regional committees to ensure that the extension was aligned with the proposed programme budget 2024–2025 and provided an opportunity to better link the programme budget with the fourteenth general programme of work.

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Business Operations) thanked Member States for their comments and guidance, which had been reflected in the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023. Input from Member States was key to the development of such documents. With regard to the comments on ensuring that adequate financing was allocated at the headquarters level, he explained that the additional resources identified had been allocated to the two critical areas of work, as well to the regional and country levels, with zero additional flexible funding for other areas of work at the headquarters level. However, it was anticipated that additional investments would be made in the future. The Secretariat was committed to accountability, transparency, efficiency, compliance and better governance and aimed to provide Member States with clear information on the operations of the Organization and the actions taken to deliver results, and would continue to make improvements in that regard.

Once finalized, the United Nations Sustainable Development Group methodology for estimating efficiencies would be shared with Member States, whose views would be taken on board. The timing of the publication of the document on the proposed revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023 had been affected by the revisions thereto and the need to consult extensively with Member States. Translating the document into all official United Nations languages, which was imperative to ensure equal access, had also contributed to the delay. Nevertheless, the Secretariat would endeavour to improve the timeliness of document publication and ensure that sufficient time was allocated to incorporate the views of Member States.

The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to note the reports contained in documents A75/6, A75/7 and A75/8.

The Committee noted the reports.

The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolution on the revision of the Programme budget 2022–2023, contained in document A75/46.

The draft resolution was approved.[1]

The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to approve the draft resolution on extending the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 to 2025 recommended by the Executive Board in resolution EB150.R4 and revised by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board, contained in document A75/53, the financial and administrative implications of which were set out in document A75/8 Add.1.

The draft resolution was approved.[2]

3. SUSTAINABLE FINANCING: REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP: Item 13 of the agenda (documents A75/9, A75/9 Add.1 and A75/54)

The CHAIR drew attention to the draft decision on sustainable financing, contained in document A75/9.

The CHAIR OF THE WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE FINANCING said that the Working Group had been established by the Executive Board through decision EB148(12) to enable WHO to have the robust structures needed to fulfil Member States' expectations. In total, 86% of WHO's budget was dependent on generous donors, and only approximately 14% of its funding was predictable. That situation put not only the independence, integrity and agility of the Organization at severe risk but also its mandated role as the leading and coordinating authority on global health. Numerous efforts had been made over the past two decades to tackle the issue of sustainable financing but without success. There had been a clear consensus among the members of the Working Group that WHO's current financing model was unacceptable. Implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group would, however, improve that situation.

Key recommendations included the need for Member States as a collective to match their willingness to fund the Organization with the demands they placed on it. In addition, any increase in Member States' assessed contributions needed to be accompanied by appropriate governance reforms to be agreed by Member States, together with the further strengthening of transparency, efficiency, accountability and compliance within the Organization. The Working Group had discussed and acknowledged the severe fiscal constraints faced by Member States, some of which had been accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Working Group had strongly recommended that the role of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board should be strengthened, potentially through additional deliberations. Regarding a potential increase in assessed contributions, the Working Group had recommended that the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly should request the Secretariat to develop budget proposals, through the regular budget cycle, for an increase of assessed contributions, with the aspiration to reach a level of 50% of the base budget 2022–2023 by the biennium 2030–2031, while aiming to achieve that by the biennium 2028–2029. It had proposed concrete steps through which to achieve that aspiration. The Working Group had also recommended that the Health Assembly should request the Secretariat to explore the feasibility of a replenishment mechanism to further broaden the financing base, in consultation with Member States and taking into consideration the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors. It had further recommended the establishment of an agile Member State task group.

The discussions among the members of the Working Group had encompassed not merely the technical aspects of the financing of WHO but also the future role of WHO in global health, including the need to ensure a less fragmented, better coordinated, more efficient and truly inclusive approach to global health governance with a fundamentally strengthened WHO at its centre. The adoption and

[1] Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's second report and adopted as resolution WHA75.5.

[2] Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's second report and adopted as resolution WHA75.6.

implementation of the recommendations would enable WHO to live up to Member States' expectations and would address many of the key issues discussed over the past two decades. He praised the strong commitment of the members of the Working Group in reaching consensus and their will to strengthen the Organization and thanked them for their readiness to compromise. He also thanked the Secretariat and regional and country offices for their support and acknowledged the role of external partners, including civil society and academic institutions, who had pushed for an ambitious outcome.

The representative of TOGO supported the recommendations of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing, in particular on increasing Member States' assessed contributions to reach a level of 50% of the base budget 2022–2023. Those recommendations would improve transparency, accountability, efficiency and compliance with regard to the management and allocation of programme budget resources.

The representative of MALAYSIA supported the recommendations of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing, in particular those on increasing the assessed contributions of Member States and on providing WHO with fully unearmarked voluntary contributions for the financing of the base programme segment. His Government agreed in principle to extend its in-kind voluntary contribution to host the WHO Global Service Centre in Cyberjaya, Malaysia, the 15-year contract for which was set to expire in December 2022. Improved budget transparency was needed, together with fair and equitable allocation and reallocation of resources to fully fund all programme budget outcomes across the three levels of the Organization. A mechanism that aligned the needs of Member States and donors would help to broaden the financing base. He urged Member States to support the recommendations of the Working Group, which would allow WHO to better coordinate and respond to global health issues.

Dr Abdool-Richards took the Chair.

The representative of the PHILIPPINES welcomed the recommendations of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing, in particular on increasing assessed contributions to 50% of the base budget 2022–2023, if possible by the biennium 2028–2029. Member States' expectations of the Organization should be matched by their willingness to fund it. Similarly, the strengthening of transparency and accountability mechanisms should be matched with Member States' willingness to increase assessed contributions. A more transparent presentation of programme budget priority-setting across all three levels of the Organization would help Member States in the preparation, evaluation and approval of the programme budget and other initiatives. He supported the establishment of the Member State task group, which would facilitate a results-based approach to cost management, and looked forward to the Secretariat's budget proposals in relation to the recommended percentage increases in assessed contributions and on the implementation plan. Member States and donors should increase the flexibility of voluntary contributions. Lastly, the establishment of a Member State-driven replenishment mechanism would promote a more robust global health architecture.

The representative of PERU welcomed the discussions on WHO reform. Overreliance on voluntary contributions hindered the Organization's ability to implement the mandates agreed by Member States and prioritized donor interests. Addressing the urgent need to strengthen health systems, in particular in developing countries, called for sustainable, predictable and transparent financing. She welcomed the extended time frame recommended by the Working Group on Sustainable Financing for increasing Member States' assessed contributions to a level of 50% of the base budget 2022–2023. However, any increase must be accompanied by a prioritization of mandates and the improved management of resources. Consideration should be given to the Member States of the Region of the Americas that contributed financially to both PAHO and WHO and a mechanism should be developed to take account of that particularity through collaboration between the two organizations.

The representative of GHANA, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the African Region, welcomed the efforts and commitment of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing and the invaluable support provided by the Secretariat throughout the process, as well the insights shared by experts. The frank and intense negotiations had resulted in consensus on the most important aspect of

improving WHO's financing, namely the recommended gradual increase in assessed contributions to 50% of the base budget segment. Initiatives to improve governance, transparency, accountability, efficiency and compliance would also be key. Recognizing the significant return on investment represented by an increase in assessed contributions, he supported the request for the Secretariat to develop a budget proposal with a targeted first increase of 20% of the assessed contributions assessment for the biennium 2022–2023, which would be presented to Member States for consideration as part of the Proposed programme budget 2024–2025. He expressed support for the draft decision and the Working Group's recommendations.

The representative of MOROCCO, speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, thanked all those that had contributed to the positive outcome reached by the Working Group on Sustainable Financing, which represented a significant milestone in the history of WHO's financing and would help to create positive long-term impacts, particularly for the Member States of the Region, many of which were facing daunting public health challenges, humanitarian crises and weak health systems. Funding should be viewed as an investment, not an expense. Sustainable financing was critical to ensure that WHO was fully equipped to deliver its mandate. She supported the recommendations of the Working Group, particularly on increasing assessed contributions with the aspiration of reaching a level of 50% of the base budget 2022–2023 by the biennium 2030–2031, with the aim of doing so by the biennium 2028–2029. She urged the Secretariat to put in place measures to ensure the effective and timely implementation of the recommendations.

The representative of FRANCE, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, said that Turkey, the candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, the country of the stabilization and association process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area Iceland, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, aligned themselves with his statement. Resolving the issue of WHO's inadequate funding was not merely about providing the Organization with sufficient, high-quality sustainable financing, but more importantly about its present and future leadership role in the global health architecture and in coordinating the response to health emergencies. WHO's dependence on voluntary and earmarked contributions for the implementation of its core programmes was unsustainable, and ambitious reform was urgently needed. He therefore welcomed the broad consensus reached through the Working Group on Sustainable Financing, which represented the first step towards an effective, agile and well-financed WHO.

He supported the aspiration for a gradual increase in assessed contributions to reach a level of 50% of the base budget 2022–2023 by the biennium 2030–2031, taking into account national capacities while also delivering on budgetary, programmatic, finance, governance and accountability initiatives. The Organization should be strengthened through an improved budget development process that prioritized activities and governance reform. Expressing support for the establishment of a Member State task group, he emphasized the need for Member States to show better budgetary discipline and to refrain from micromanaging the implementation of agreed programmes and from requesting new programmes or priorities without additional unearmarked funding. He supported the recommendations of the Working Group.

The representative of POLAND welcomed the efforts and commitment of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing and the compromise reached. He was pleased to note that the report of the Working Group was focused not only on the need for an increase in assessed contributions, but also on the importance of in-depth discussions on the necessary reforms to improve the functioning of WHO and its leading role in the global health architecture. He strongly supported the proposed establishment of the Member State task group and looked forward to engaging in its discussions.

The representative of INDIA said that voluntary contributions needed to be unearmarked to enhance the Organization's operational flexibility. A mechanism should be developed for involving Member States in the selection of activities in order to reflect countries' priorities, as well as in expenditure and monitoring. Value for money must be ensured. Linking expenditure at the country level with parameters such as population and burden of disease was also necessary. An annual country report

should be prepared on activities undertaken by Member States, including information on briefings, consultations and evaluations conducted by country offices. There was also a need to ensure effective and improved representation of low- and middle-income countries at the senior management level and in technical committees across the three levels of the Organization; an annual report on that parameter would also be welcome. He agreed in principle with the proposed phased increase in assessed contributions, which must be accompanied by effective Member State consultations, as well as by an accountability mechanism, clear outcome indicators and a review of country office and Member State expenditure. Transparency with regard to data reporting and disbursement of funds was also crucial. In terms of WHO's involvement with non-State actors, it was important to ensure that there was no conflict of interest, that transparency was maintained and that the approval of the Member States concerned was obtained.

The representative of AUSTRALIA said that the COVID-19 pandemic had brought into sharp focus not only WHO's essential and central role in global health but also the significant funding challenges faced by the Organization in fulfilling its mandate and delivering on the increasing expectations of Member States. Recommendations of many expert reviews had made it clear that predictable and flexible funding for WHO was core to managing future health emergencies and strengthening global health architecture, and he noted that not doing so risked undermining the delivery of WHO's programme of work and constraining WHO in addressing future health challenges. He applauded the efforts of all those involved in building a consensus through the Working Group, whose recommendations showed a strong commitment to empowering and safeguarding WHO to enable it to continue to deliver outcomes both for Member States and the global community. The necessary governance and budgetary reforms must be considered and implemented in parallel, and actionable reform priorities established through the proposed Member State task group, whose next steps should be clarified at the forthcoming session of the Executive Board. He noted that the commitment to better quality financing for the Organization would provide the certainty needed to facilitate next steps on WHO reform.

The representative of SENEGAL welcomed the efforts of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing and recognized the need for robust action to change the current funding situation. She supported the Working Group's recommendations, especially those on: increasing assessed contributions; strengthening the role of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee to make it more effective and transparent; and improving the equitable allocation of resources, including for noncommunicable diseases, emergency preparedness and, in particular, data and scientific activities. However, those objectives would only be achieved by strengthening efficiency, transparency and accountability. Strong implementation of the recommendations must be ensured.

The representative of SLOVAKIA recognized the importance of a meaningful adjustment of resources. Ways of calibrating national financial schemes must be explored to enable the mobilization of resources beyond assessed contributions. An international coordinated stepwise process should be established to support investments in global health at the national level, particularly in the areas of planning, implementation and monitoring. As part of that process, the Secretariat should provide a transparent overview of the areas to which Member States' resources had been allocated, with the aim of identifying added value in relation to addressing gaps in national health systems. The ability of Member States to provide contributions should be managed in a predictable and structured manner so as to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level; technical support should be provided by the Secretariat to that end. Progress towards the Goals would also be facilitated through an overall re-assessment of the resources allocated to global health.

The representative of BANGLADESH welcomed the efforts of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing and supported the recommendation to increase assessed contributions by 50% in a stepwise manner. Flexible and unearmarked voluntary contributions would nevertheless remain the cornerstone of WHO's long-term sustainable financing. Further discussions were needed on the Secretariat's proposal regarding the base programme budget in order to confirm how the increase in assessed contributions would be realized, taking into account the resource and capacity constraints of

developing countries. A strengthened WHO was necessary more than ever before in order to optimize deliverables in developing countries. Member States should demonstrate their commitment to transforming WHO through sustainable financing. Efficient management and prioritization of key deliverables were necessary to improve governance. Lastly, measures to strengthen health systems must be prioritized and alternative ways of replenishing the base budget explored. He expressed support for the draft decision.

The representative of ETHIOPIA acknowledged the efforts of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing and appreciated Member States' input in that process. She recognized the need to ensure the sustainable financing of WHO in order to enable it to fulfil its role and mandates and fully supported the recommendation to increase assessed contributions in a predictable manner. However, the Secretariat must take into consideration the current financial situation of Member States, particularly those in the African Region, whose economies had been strained as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and other global events. She encouraged the Secretariat to explore alternative flexible and sustainable financing mechanisms, including through collaboration with development partners, to establish unearmarked pooled funding from voluntary contributions and the private sector in order to enable the Secretariat to better respond to Member States' needs.

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION welcomed the achievements of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing. The consensus reached had been largely facilitated by the format of the meetings of the Working Group, in which all countries had participated on an equal footing. He hoped that the agreements reached would create a robust foundation to implement practical measures to strengthen WHO's funding base. The recommended gradual increase in assessed contributions clearly demonstrated the resolve of Member States to significantly enhance the profile of WHO in the global health architecture and its success would require the combined efforts of the Secretariat and Member States. He emphasized that any increase in assessed contributions must be accompanied by appropriate governance reforms, including in relation to the budget development process.

The representative of SLOVENIA thanked the Working Group on Sustainable Financing for its work. He fully supported the recommendations, which represented an important step towards securing the Organization's financial sustainability. His Government had expressed support for an increase in assessed contributions during the discussions of the Working Group and welcomed the consensus reached, even though it was a compromise. He welcomed in particular the proposed replenishment mechanism and establishment of a Member State task group but cautioned that the work of existing bodies, such as the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, must not be duplicated. Improving financial governance and management would not only ensure better and independent funding but would also contribute to a more transparent and responsible use of resources. It was unacceptable for WHO's experts to waste their time securing financial resources as a result of the unpredictable and inflexible funding provided and for priorities to be jeopardized by a lack of alignment with available resources.

The representative of NORWAY, expressing support for the draft decision, acknowledged the tireless efforts of the members of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing, as well as the commitment of Member States and the Secretariat. The historic consensus reached would put WHO on a path towards more sustainable financing. The proposed establishment of a Member State task group was a welcome step. In that context, the Executive Board, at its 151st session, should decide on a timely and efficient process to facilitate Member States' input. He looked forward to the Secretariat's analysis of a potential replenishment mechanism for consideration at the thirty-seventh meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and at the 152nd session of the Executive Board. Such a mechanism should cover the entire cycle of the general programme of work in order to significantly enhance the predictability of WHO's financing. Lastly, to strengthen accountability and transparency, WHO's results should be independently reviewed before being submitted to the governing bodies.

The representative of TURKEY appreciated the significant efforts of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing and all those who had contributed to the process. The negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic had been a decisive factor in the consensus reached on the final recommendations. He requested the Secretariat to prepare budget proposals for a gradual increase in assessed contributions and lay the groundwork for Member States to reach consensus on the next steps. He expressed support for the recommendations and the proposed way forward.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA thanked the Working Group on Sustainable Financing and Member States for their critical work. A stronger, more agile WHO with a solid financial foundation was essential to enable it to address current and future global health challenges. She welcomed the consensus reached, including the request for the Secretariat to develop a budget proposal, with a first increase of 20% of assessed contributions to be presented to Member States for consideration at the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly. Timely and regular updates on the progress made on the reform process could inform the development of the implementation plan, enable Member States to share key milestones and progress with national bodies and would be critical to the consideration of future increases in assessed contributions. The timely sharing of related documents was imperative to allow Member States to review them with due time and consideration and engage effectively in discussions. Shifting from an aspirational to a concrete and accountable budget required new approaches and actions. Her Government was strongly committed to improving the governance and transparency of WHO. Key areas for reform included budget and financial transparency and oversight; accountability; responsible allocation of resources across all three levels of the Organization; strengthened human resources management; improved protection against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; and improved compliance, risk management and ethics.

The representative of NAMIBIA commended the members of the Working Group for their commitment, thanking the Secretariat for its support and technical experts for their input. The Working Group had proposed a solid way forward to change the unacceptable status quo. The bold recommendations reached by consensus on the complex and multidimensional issue of sustainable financing had been made on the understanding that the Secretariat would also implement initiatives to improve governance, transparency, accountability, efficiency and compliance. He fully supported the adoption of the recommendations and the establishment of a Member State task group and looked forward to further discussions on its programme of work.

The representative of MEXICO said that during the discussions of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing, his Government had highlighted that the issue of sustainable financing should be considered not only in terms of an increase in resources but also through the prioritization of topics and an analysis of value added and results achieved in strengthening national capacities. It had also outlined the importance of reform in the areas of governance, transparency, accountability and efficiency and the need to explore innovative and alternative sources of financing. In addition, it had highlighted the need for effective coordination across the three levels of the Organization, as well as with other entities of the United Nations system and international partners. It had further considered that insufficient information had been provided on the proposed increase in assessed contributions. The COVID-19 pandemic had affected the availability of resources, in addition to which his Government's current national fiscal policy would not allow for an increase in assessed contributions. Nevertheless, he expressed support for the recommendations in the interest of establishing a sustainable financing system that positioned the Organization as the coordinating authority on global health, on the understanding that a Member State task group would be established to guide the Secretariat with regard to mechanisms to improve resource efficiency and accountability.

The representative of NEW ZEALAND acknowledged the efforts and commitment of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing, which had enabled progress to be made towards urgent and much-needed change. Sustainable, flexible and predictable funding that reflected an ever-evolving public health context must be ensured to enable WHO to play its crucial role as the normative voice on global health. He therefore strongly supported the recommendation to increase assessed contributions to 50% of the base budget 2022–2023 no later than by the biennium 2030–2031. Such an increase must

be accompanied by targeted governance reforms that would require action on the part of both Member States and the Secretariat. The transparency, efficiency and accountability of the Organization were paramount, and effective resource allocation was required to address needs and build capacity, particularly at the country level. The Secretariat must be supported in prioritizing activities based on the funding provided. The recommended development of an implementation plan on financing reform was also a positive step, as was the proposed establishment of a Member State task group.

Dr Nakatani resumed the Chair.

The representative of ITALY supported the long overdue revision of WHO's financing model and the proposed increase in assessed contributions to a level of 50% of the base budget. The recommendations of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing struck the right balance between the need for a game-changing shift in the Organization's financing model and the importance of improving the budgetary, programmatic and financial governance of WHO. They represented a historic opportunity to strengthen WHO as the leading and coordinating authority on global health. He was confident that the recommendations would address underfunded areas within the base budget. Political will would be crucial for their smooth and timely implementation and Member States must play their part.

(For continuation of the discussion, see the summary records of the fourth meeting, section 1.)

The meeting rose at 17:25.

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