World Health Organization

SEVENTY-FIFTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY **A75/A/PSR/8**
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COMMITTEE A

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE EIGHTH MEETING

Palais des Nations, Geneva
Thursday, 26 May 2022, scheduled at 14:30

Chair: Dr H. NAKATANI (Japan)

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EIGHTH MEETING

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PILLAR 2: ONE BILLION MORE PEOPLE BETTER PROTECTED FROM HEALTH EMERGENCIES

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES: PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE: Item 16 of the agenda (continued from the seventh meeting)

The Independent Oversight and Advisory Committee for the WHO Health Emergencies Programme: Item 16.1 of the agenda (document A75/16) (continued)

WHO's work in health emergencies: Item 16.3 of the agenda (documents A75/10 Rev.1 and A75/47) (continued)

The CHAIR recalled that two draft resolutions had been proposed under the current agenda item. The first was a draft resolution on the health emergency in Ukraine and refugee receiving and hosting countries, stemming from the Russian Federation's aggression, proposed by a group of countries including Ukraine, and a draft resolution on the health emergency in and around Ukraine and refugee receiving and hosting countries, proposed by the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic. The draft resolutions would be considered through two separate roll-call votes.

The representative of UKRAINE, speaking also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Vanuatu, said that the invasion of Ukraine by the Government of the Russian Federation had caused an extensive health and humanitarian crisis with grave health impacts within and beyond Ukraine, including civilian deaths, disrupted health services and an increased risk of infectious disease outbreaks. It had also aggravated the pre-existing global food crisis, affecting the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. More than 14 million Ukrainians had been forced to flee their homes, pushing the total number of displaced people globally to an unprecedented level. Far from politicizing the situation, the draft resolution proposed by her Government focused specifically on the health impacts of the invasion. Meanwhile, in a cynical attempt to dupe the Health Assembly into supporting its draft resolution, the Government of the Russian Federation had lifted text from the draft resolution proposed by her Government but had removed all references to its aggression and the health impacts beyond the European Region. She urged Member States to reject that draft resolution, which was based on a twisted alternative reality in which the Government of the Russian Federation bore no responsibility for the crisis.

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION categorically rejected all allegations made by the representative of Ukraine. It did not accept the politicized and one-sided draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine, which failed to mention Kiev's eight-year campaign of aggression against the inhabitants of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions or policies aimed at oppressing the Russian-speaking population, depriving them of their rights and social protections and destroying health infrastructure. The Member States sponsoring that draft resolution had for many years stood by and

watched the illegal acts committed by the Kiev regime, including war crimes committed by military groups, and were enabling the escalation of the crisis in Ukraine and the surrounding area by delivering military equipment rather than medical supplies. He asked Member States not to support that draft resolution, which was clearly biased against his Government and contained baseless accusations. Attempts to politicize the work of the Health Assembly undermined the effectiveness of its decisions and sought to convert it into a forum to settle political scores.

The draft resolution proposed by his Government focused on resolving the crisis as quickly as possible in line with WHO's mandate through a comprehensive and practical approach to humanitarian issues, avoiding politically motivated statements aimed at discrediting or stigmatizing other Member States. It called on Member States to enhance measures to meet the health-related and other needs of people in Ukraine and sought to end the Ukrainian Government's deliberate use of civilian infrastructure for military purposes and civilians as human shields. A comprehensive package of measures to protect the right to health of those affected by the humanitarian crisis could serve as a foundation for Health Assembly resolutions on crises in other regions. Efforts to support the health sectors in Ukraine and neighbouring countries receiving and hosting refugees should be holistic, take into account the longstanding crisis in the Ukrainian health system and facilitate access to the health services needed in conflict situations. The Secretariat should continue to collect, document and disseminate information on attacks on patients and health workers, facilities and transport in an impartial, objective and transparent manner and ensure that the health response on the ground complied with the highest standards.

The representative of FRANCE, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, aligned himself with the statement given by the representative of Ukraine and said that the candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Moldova aligned themselves with his statement. The draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine did not reach beyond WHO's mandate or seek to suspend cooperation between WHO and the Government of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, it did not envisage the application of double standards to the countries concerned: the impact of the war of aggression waged by the Government of the Russian Federation against Ukraine did not stop at the borders of Ukraine or neighbouring countries, and the draft resolution called on Member States to fund all emergency responses. The Government of the Russian Federation had no legitimate right to propose a draft resolution on the matter as it was at the very least dubious for an aggressor to offer solutions to a crisis that it had triggered. That draft resolution was merely a cynical attempt to whitewash the realities of the war and failed to address the indirect health impacts and health risks beyond the European Region, in particular with regard to food security. The only action required of that Government was to end the war, which was undermining collective efforts to save lives and strengthen the global health architecture. He urged Member States to vote against the draft resolution proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation.

The representative of ESTONIA, speaking on behalf of the Nordic and Baltic countries, aligned herself with the statements made by the representative of Ukraine and the representative of France on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The military aggression and invasion of Ukraine by the Government of the Russian Federation had led to a devastating health emergency with a regional and global impact. Attacks on health workers, facilities, patients and supplies in Ukraine were acts of unconscionable cruelty that were depriving people of urgently needed care, endangering health care providers and undermining health systems. The draft resolution proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation shamelessly disregarded the facts of its aggression in Ukraine and was a cynical attempt to manipulate the truth and ridicule the principles and values of the United Nations. She called on all Member States to vote against it and to instead support the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine.

The representative of MONACO expressed solidarity with the people of Ukraine and condemned all attacks perpetrated against civilians and health workers, facilities and transport since the start of the invasion. Noting that the Geneva Conventions clearly set out the rules applicable in conflict settings,

she urgently called for international humanitarian law to be respected. She welcomed the dedication demonstrated by Ukrainians who continued to work in dangerous settings. Ukrainian refugees in Monaco were being provided with appropriate assistance, including mental health care. She expressed support for the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine.

The representative of COLOMBIA denounced the premeditated and unjust attacks against the Ukrainian people perpetrated by the Government of the Russian Federation, which threatened international peace and security and violated international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the rights of Ukrainians to health, life and food. The impact of the war on the global economy, including the price of food and basic supplies, was also affecting the ability of the most vulnerable people in the world to enjoy their rights to health and food. He expressed solidarity with the people of Ukraine and admiration for their determination in resisting the aggression. His Government would continue to support efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian refugees.

The representative of TURKEY expressed appreciation for the Organization's tireless efforts to respond to emergencies around the world and welcomed its increasing effectiveness and agility in responding to the health needs of affected populations. As the only truly global actor built on universal membership in the global health system, WHO's support was vital to those living in emergency situations and crisis-affected regions experiencing ongoing disruptions to health care. External factors outside the health sector, including armed conflicts, further complicated existing vulnerabilities and aggravated fragile health situations. In that context, he welcomed the monitoring activities of the Organization. He expressed regret regarding the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, noting with deep concern the disruption to health services in the country and the exportation of food supplies. It was vital to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access to, inter alia, medical supplies. His Government would continue to call for diplomatic efforts to achieve peace.

The representative of POLAND condemned the aggression directed by the Government of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and objected to the propaganda spread by that Government to the Health Assembly. He supported the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine and encouraged other Member States to do so. He called on Member States to reject the draft resolution proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation, which did not aim to improve the health situation but rather to stoke conflict. It was a shame that such steps had been taken by a member of the Executive Board.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA said that the unjustified war launched by the Government of the Russian Federation against Ukraine had unleashed a humanitarian crisis. The conflict constituted wanton destruction for purely political aims, justified on the basis of lies and disinformation. Its devastating impact was not limited to Ukraine, but could be felt across the world through increasing food insecurity and poverty. The war was the source of the current health crisis in Ukraine and was diverting resources from other areas in urgent need. The Health Assembly needed to support all people impacted by health crises, take action when needed and uphold the principle that no Member State must ever destroy the health system of another in an unprovoked and unjustified war. She welcomed the draft resolution submitted by the Government of Ukraine and called on Member States to vote in its favour. On the other hand, the draft resolution proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation was an attempt by that Government to present itself as a champion of health and humanitarian relief and deny responsibility for the health emergency in Ukraine. Its text had been lifted in part from a draft resolution presented by that Government to the United Nations Security Council, which had failed to achieve approval, and from the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine. Voting in its favour would mean standing with a country trying to destroy what the Health Assembly stood for. It was not a question of politicizing the issue: the health of millions of people was at stake and the Government of the Russian Federation must be held accountable.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND said that the illegal, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by the Government of the Russian Federation had caused horrific health impacts including an unimaginable psychological toll on Ukrainians. The invasion was also exacerbating other crises across the world of the light of its impact on food, energy and commodity prices. Nevertheless, the Government of the Russian Federation had chosen to continue its relentless assault, weaponizing the global food supply and harming the world's most vulnerable people. While he understood concerns regarding the politicization of the work of the Health Assembly, war was a health issue, and the Health Assembly must not be afraid to tackle health crises, including their causes. He urged all Member States to support the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine and to stand up for the people of that country and international law. Member States tempted to support the draft resolution proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation should rethink their decision to avoid condoning suffering.

The representative of BELARUS expressed concern about the worsening situation in Ukraine. Continuation of the conflict would cause irreparable damage to the Ukrainian health system and the health of the Ukrainian population. The conflict could only be resolved through intensive political and diplomatic efforts by all parties. She did not support the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine, which criticized the actions of only one party. Although it contained important provisions relating to the emergency response to the health crisis, it made no reference to the inadmissible use of health facilities and other civilian buildings for military purposes, nor did it mention the need to protect the wounded and the sick, treat prisoners of war fairly and allow civilians to freely leave conflict zones. The draft resolution had also called for the application of measures that could affect the normal functioning of Member States, which was counterproductive and could lead to a crisis within the Organization. The supply of deadly weapons to Ukraine by several sponsors of the draft resolution was not helping to stabilize the emergency health situation. The draft resolution proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation was more in line with the principle of impartiality in WHO's work. It was regrettable that WHO and its Member States had found themselves in a political discussion. She called on all countries and international organizations to support political and diplomatic efforts to put a swift end to the conflict in Ukraine.

The representative of the SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC supported WHO's contribution to the health emergency response in and around Ukraine, which should follow a comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach in line with the Organization's technical role. Decisions made in the course of that work should not be politicized, and all aspects of the emergency should be addressed in a non-selective manner. He therefore rejected the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine, which was biased, promoted accusations based on unreliable open sources, politicized the work of humanitarian agencies in emergencies and stretched beyond WHO's mandate. It also ignored the causes of the crisis and the suffering of civilians in the Donbas region, including systematic hostilities and the shelling of health facilities, which had hampered access to health care. Furthermore, it failed to mention the illegal practice of using civilians as human shields and health facilities for military purposes. A similarly selective approach had been adopted in the context of other conflicts and crises, where disinformation had been used to justify decisions by the same group of countries in their efforts to create crises to serve their own narrow political interests. In the interest of dialogue, peace and stability in and around Ukraine, he encouraged Member States to support the draft resolution proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation, which focused on WHO's technical role and distanced all parties from political accusations and agendas that would prolong the crisis.

The representative of CHINA expressed deep regret regarding the situation in Ukraine and stressed the need to respect the integrity and sovereignty of all States, including Ukraine, as well as the aims and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Legitimate security concerns must be taken into consideration and all efforts to resolve the crisis should be supported. His Government supported all efforts to improve the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and defend fundamental rights. All parties must support dialogue between the Governments of Ukraine and the Russian Federation to achieve

peace. Organizations in the United Nations system, including WHO, must work to secure peace and security in the region in order to de-escalate the situation and find a diplomatic solution to the crisis. However, the Health Assembly was not the appropriate forum to discuss matters of international peace and security. He opposed the politicization of health care issues and any attempt to stoke tensions, urging WHO to focus on matters that fell within its remit.

The representative of COSTA RICA expressed regret at the impact of the war on access to health. She welcomed WHO's efforts to ensure access to essential health care services without discrimination and thanked the countries receiving and hosting refugees fleeing the aggression waged by the Government of the Russian Federation. She supported the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine and called for an end to hostilities, as well as respect for territorial integrity and international humanitarian law. Her Government supported efforts to document attacks against Ukrainians, including sexual abuse perpetrated by military personnel; provide health care to people displaced by war; and protect vulnerable people and health workers.

The representative of CANADA said that the unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine led by the President of the Russian Federation was causing a widespread humanitarian crisis at the regional and global levels and depriving millions of people of safe, reliable access to essential health services and nutrition. The war was undermining efforts to save lives and strengthen global health security and it had led to an increase in food prices, exacerbating food insecurity across the globe. She called on all Member States to condemn the aggressive actions of the Government of the Russian Federation and to vote for the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine. Member States must not allow the Government of the Russian Federation to manipulate information at the current meeting.

The representative of NICARAGUA supported any humanitarian efforts to address conflicts that threatened security and lives in line with the principle of neutrality, emphasizing the importance of multilateral relations based on mutual respect, equality and the rule of law. Any attempt to exclude or suspend a country from participation in the work of an international organization constituted a violation of human rights, international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Her own country had been subjected to unilateral, illegal and coercive measures imposed by powerful States, which had hampered development. She therefore rejected any proposal to suspend the participation of the Government of the Russian Federation in WHO's work, a measure that would not advance peace and dialogue. Suspending any Member State from participation for reasons not connected to WHO's core objectives would damage the Organization's leading role in international health cooperation and the work of Member States to combat communicable diseases. She expressed support for the draft resolution proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation.

The representative of JAPAN said that the aggression by the Government of the Russian Federation against Ukraine was a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and a unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force that had shaken the foundations of the international order. He condemned the civilian deaths caused by the military forces of the Russian Federation, which constituted a grave breach of international humanitarian law, as well as the attacks on health facilities and workers. He expressed deep concern at the difficulties in ensuring adequate health care in Ukraine.

The representative of KYRGYZSTAN said that WHO's work must be governed by the principles of neutrality and impartiality. Since the term "exceptional circumstances" contained in Article 7 of the Constitution of the World Health Organization had not been precisely defined, it could potentially be misinterpreted and used against any Member State. His Government could not support the application of such an approach to any country, as all Member States contributed to the development of public health. Noting that the WHO European Office for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases was based in Moscow, he said that any decision to move WHO offices or to stop holding WHO regional meetings in a country should only be taken as an exceptional measure based on a careful assessment of alleged violations. The outcome of the vote on the two draft resolutions could have a

detrimental impact on the implementation of health programmes in many countries, including his own. His Government maintained a neutral position on the situation in Ukraine and supported peaceful measures to resolve the conflict through political and diplomatic means, including through the establishment of new negotiation mechanisms. He stressed the need to avoid politicizing the work of WHO and called on Member States to avoid making radically politicized decisions within the Organization.

The representative of the MARSHALL ISLANDS asked to be added to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine. He condemned the invasion of Ukraine, calling on the Government of the Russian Federation to immediately cease all attacks on health workers and facilities and allow the safe evacuation of civilians. He expressed deep concern at the failure to secure a ceasefire. The targeting of hospitals and the hindrance of free, rapid and safe humanitarian assistance constituted crimes under international humanitarian law and must stop. WHO must prioritize the sustainable procurement of urgently needed essential medicines and equipment to support health and humanitarian workers in Ukraine. He called on all Member States to denounce the egregious violations of the human right to health committed by the Government of the Russian Federation.

The representative of the ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN emphasized the need to peacefully settle disputes in compliance with international humanitarian law and WHO's norms and standards, ensuring respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States. Expressing concern regarding the ongoing health emergency in conflict areas, he called on all parties to protect humanitarian and health workers, transport, facilities and equipment in line with international humanitarian law. He called for negotiations and a resolution to the conflict between the Governments of the Russian Federation and Ukraine and said that his Government stood ready to provide assistance to that end. Only by adopting a reasonable and responsible approach that avoided vindictive provocation could the international community help to de-escalate the conflict and mitigate its impact.

The representative of NEW ZEALAND expressed solidarity with Ukraine following the illegal and unprovoked invasion by the Government of the Russian Federation. He encouraged Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine and against the cynical draft resolution proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation, which asked Member States to ignore its responsibility for the health crisis in Ukraine. The persistent and intensifying public health challenges experienced by the Ukrainian people were being exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The appalling attacks on civilians and health facilities and workers reflected the incomprehensible disregard of the Government of the Russian Federation for the impact of war on civilian lives. Furthermore, the war's impact stretched far beyond Ukraine's borders, aggravating a global food crisis that would hit the world's poorest and most vulnerable people the hardest. He called for an immediate end to the hostilities perpetrated by the Government of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

The representative of the REPUBLIC OF KOREA expressed deep concern regarding the ongoing aggression by the Government of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The reported attacks on health facilities were particularly alarming and the COVID-19 pandemic was only exacerbating their devastating impact. Deliberate attacks on health facilities could never be justified. She called for an immediate ceasefire and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need. She reiterated her Government's support for the Global Health for Peace Initiative and commended WHO's efforts to rapidly respond to the health emergency in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

The representative of SAN MARINO expressed deep concern at the events in Ukraine. She condemned the acts of aggression against civilian infrastructure, especially health facilities, and said that the right to health and access to care must be guaranteed to all under all circumstances. Her Government stood in solidarity with Ukraine and had implemented a range of humanitarian initiatives

to welcome refugees. She called for an end to the war and requested to be added to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine.

The representative of the DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA said that the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine would not foster regional peace and security and would instead exacerbate the situation and sow discord among Member States. WHO meetings must not be politicized. He expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Government of the Russian Federation to resolve the issue in a non-politicized manner by calling for joint action among all parties.

The representative of AUSTRALIA condemned, in the strongest possible terms, the unprovoked, unjust and illegal invasion of Ukraine by the Government of the Russian Federation, which was a gross violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. It contravened the rules-based order and WHO's mandate to promote the highest attainable standard of health for all people. She expressed concern at the reports of attacks on health facilities. Her Government supported Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and stood in solidarity with the Ukrainian people. The Government of the Russian Federation must immediately withdraw its forces from Ukrainian territory, in line with the decision of the International Court of Justice. She strongly urged Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine and clarified that its approval would not lead to the suspension of the Government of the Russian Federation as a Member State of WHO.

The representative of ISRAEL thanked the Secretariat for providing vital assistance in Ukraine in challenging circumstances. She condemned the ongoing attack on Ukraine by the Government of the Russian Federation, which must respect Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The impact of the invasion on civilians and the Ukrainian health system was a cause for serious concern, and the restricted access to health care and medicines was likely to further damage the health of the Ukrainian population while their mental health needs were intensifying.

The representative of the BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA said that his Government was unable to participate in the vote as it was in arrears to WHO owing to the illegal and damaging unilateral sanctions imposed by the Government of the United States of America and its European allies, which prevented his Government from accessing its resources. The draft resolution proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation took a comprehensive approach to the conflict, which was affecting victims on both sides. It was important to avoid reductionist and unilateral perspectives that ran counter to the principle of global health for peace. He called for lasting peace and an end to hostilities through dialogue and mutual respect. Criminalizing a Member State or calling for their exclusion from WHO's work would be nonsensical; in particular, restricting the capacity for cooperation of the Government of the Russian Federation, which had provided technical support and vaccines to his country, would have a direct negative impact on those who benefited from that cooperation. He called for joint efforts to tackle the various ongoing health crises, including those relating to conflicts not discussed in the present forum.

The representative of VANUATU asked for his Government to be added to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine and called on all Member States to support it. He expressed deep concern regarding the health needs of the people displaced as result of the war in Ukraine. The issue was a matter of health, not politics. Member States should work closely with the Secretariat and other humanitarian organizations to meet the health needs of the people of Ukraine.

The representative of INDONESIA, noting with concern the impact of the conflict on people's health and health systems, called on all parties to adhere to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty. However, WHO and its Member States should not apply double standards to the situations in Ukraine and other parts of the world. For example, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, had not received the same level of attention from the international community, including from the Member

States that had sponsored the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine. Access to health services was among the first areas to be badly affected in situations of conflict, and without timely assistance, the crisis in the health sector would further jeopardize people's health and well-being. The action proposed in the draft resolution should seek to mitigate the health impacts of conflicts, taking into account the principle of impartiality and WHO's areas of competence, capacity, resources and ability to deliver on the ground and fulfil its mandate.

The representative of KENYA said that the war in Ukraine was a threat to international peace and security and was aggravating the escalating food, energy and financial crises. Its impact was most keenly felt in developing countries, many of which were already dealing with the effects of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic and growing hunger levels. She called for an end to the hostilities and condemned all attacks on health workers and facilities. She commended the Secretariat's efforts to coordinate the humanitarian health response in Ukraine and neighbouring countries alongside partners. The Secretariat should continue to provide technical support to ensure that neighbouring countries could meet the needs of refugees and the Ukrainian health system could meet immediate local needs. She called for continued dialogue and concerted multilateral efforts on the matter.

The representative of the FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA said that the dire humanitarian situation caused by the deliberate and reprehensible attacks on civilians and health facilities by the Government of the Russian Federation constituted serious violations of international humanitarian law. He condemned the aggression against Ukraine and called for full compliance with international humanitarian law, respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and measures to protect vulnerable groups, health and humanitarian workers and health systems. The Health Assembly should take responsibility for addressing the humanitarian catastrophe and consider the application of the relevant articles of the Constitution of the World Health Organization. He urged Member States to support the draft resolution proposed by the Government of Ukraine and to reject the draft resolution proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation.

At the invitation of the CHAIR, the LEGAL COUNSEL explained the procedure for the roll-call votes. The Member States whose right to vote had been suspended by virtue of Article 7 of the Constitution, or which were not represented at the Health Assembly, and would therefore not participate in the votes, were: Afghanistan, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Myanmar, Niue, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

A vote on the draft resolution proposed by Ukraine was taken by roll-call, the names of the Member States being called in the French alphabetical order, starting with Jamaica, the letter J having been determined by lot.

The result of the vote was:

In favour: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

Against: Algeria, Belarus, Burundi, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Mali, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic.

Abstaining: Angola, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cameroon, Dominica, Egypt, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Absent: Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Congo, Cook Islands, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Kiribati, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Morocco, Nauru, Palau, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tonga, Turkmenistan.

The draft resolution was therefore approved by 88 votes to 12, with 53 abstentions.[1]

A vote on the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation was taken by roll-call, the names of the Member States being called in the French alphabetical order, starting with Lesotho, the letter L having been determined by lot.

The result of the vote was:

In favour: Algeria, Belarus, Burundi, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Zimbabwe.

Against: Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Germany, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay.

Abstaining: Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, Egypt, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Switzerland, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Zambia.

[1] Transmitted to the Health Assembly in the Committee's fourth report and adopted as resolution WHA75.11.

Absent: Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cook Islands, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Kiribati, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Mauritius, Morocco, Nauru, Palau, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tonga, Turkey, Turkmenistan.

The draft resolution was therefore rejected by 66 votes to 15, with 70 abstentions.

The representative of the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, speaking in explanation of vote, noted with regret that a group of countries had succeeded in promoting a biased, politicized resolution. He fully rejected many of its provisions, which were not based on fact, and said that it did not acknowledge: the genesis of the crisis; Kiev's responsibility for monstrous crimes committed against its own people; or the reprehensible role played by those countries that had stood by and allowed attacks to be perpetrated and that were now inflaming the conflict by supplying weapons. The crimes committed by the Kiev regime against the people in the Donbass and now other regions of Ukraine were under intense scrutiny and had been witnessed by thousands.

The groundless accusations levelled at the Russian Federation relating to attacks detected by WHO's Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care were deeply concerning. The Surveillance System was unable to identify those responsible for the attack, but numerous other facts regarding the attacks, including the use of medical personnel and patients as a human shield, had come to light. He expressed the hope that WHO would take due note of those facts and the unconscionable use of the Surveillance System to level accusations at the Russian Federation, an act that risked undermining trust in that very System. The Director-General's report clearly showed the appalling health situation that had endured in Ukraine for many years. As such, he wholly rejected attempts to blame the Russian Federation for the collapse of the health care system in Ukraine.

It was clear that a politicized resolution would not improve the situation for the people in Ukraine. It was also evident that the sponsors of that resolution had no such goal. Ukraine and its people were being used as a weapon against the Russian Federation, thus driving a wedge between Russians and Ukrainians, who were a single people. Such political engineering by the West was unacceptable. Attempts to use WHO to stigmatize a country for no reason other than to preserve the global domination held by a certain group of countries threatened to undermine international cooperation and progress on global health issues and should be categorically rejected.

The Russian Federation would bring peace to Ukraine, continue to provide widespread humanitarian aid, and begin restoring and developing the affected regions for the sake of their inhabitants. The Russian Federation held health care amid its highest priorities and stood ready to engage in meaningful, constructive and non-politicized cooperation with WHO. He expressed thanks to those countries that had supported the draft resolution proposed by his Government; they clearly understood the tasks that stood before Member States in crisis situations. In future, political manoeuvring by individual groups of countries at WHO must be prevented through an approach based on practical solutions that restored and protected people's right to health.

The representative of FRANCE, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States and in explanation of vote, said that the position of the Health Assembly was clear and the Russian Federation's refusal to listen to the United Nations' voice of reason was regrettable. The European Union and its Member States had voted against the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation for three main reasons. First, the Russian Federation, as the aggressor, and recognized as such by the United Nations General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the International Court of Justice, among others, had no legitimate right to propose solutions to an emergency situation that it had created. Secondly, the draft resolution was a cynical attempt to distort the facts, creating the false impression that the Russian Federation was not responsible for its actions in Ukraine and denying the evidence brought forward by numerous impartial institutions and persons. Lastly, the draft resolution did not address the increased health risks posed to numerous Member States outside the European Region, in

particular risks related to the food security crisis created by the disruption of grain exports by the Russian Federation and the blocking of Ukrainian exports.

The representative of CUBA, speaking in explanation of vote, reaffirmed his Government's support for the important work of WHO, which was based on the principles of objectivity, impartiality and transparency. Inclusive and cooperative approaches were needed that avoided politicization and exclusion. Reiterating his Government's commitment to international humanitarian law, he called on all parties to protect the Ukrainian people and civilian infrastructure, including health facilities, and supported efforts to address the health and other urgent needs of the Ukrainian people.

Several paragraphs of the resolution proposed by Ukraine were beyond the mandate and responsibilities of WHO. Moreover, the text, in its current form, could be used to deprive a Member State of its rights within, and the important services provided by, the Organization, thereby negatively affecting the health of the population of that Member State, with regional and international repercussions. None of WHO's functions listed in Article 2 of its Constitution justified the use of the Organization for any purpose other than that clearly defined in Article 1: the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. For those reasons, his Government had voted against the resolution proposed by Ukraine.

The representative of the SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC, speaking in explanation of vote, expressed regret at the approval of the resolution proposed by Ukraine, which was politically motivated. The resolution took a unilateral, biased approach that incited hatred towards the Russian Federation, promoted baseless accusations derived from sources of unknown origin and ignored the causes of the crisis, as well as the rights and years-long suffering of civilians in the Donbass region. It had been sponsored by countries that were complicit in the creation of the crisis and, as such, was proof of double standards. WHO's response to the health emergency in and around Ukraine required a comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach that respected the Organization's technical role, avoided politicization, and addressed all aspects and causes of the state of emergency. Regrettably, the approved resolution met none of those criteria.

The representative of BRAZIL, speaking in explanation of vote, said that, in conflict situations, WHO must draw attention to health conditions on the ground, present objective and thorough assessments and provide a space for dialogue and cooperation. He affirmed his Government's willingness to maintain its constructive engagement in addressing the health challenges faced by Ukrainians and protecting all those affected by the conflict in Ukraine. The Constitution of the World Health Organization gave the Organization a comprehensive mandate to monitor health situations around the world and propose measures in the light of technical criteria and objective indicators. A resolution specifically addressing the health challenges faced by Ukraine was therefore unnecessary to meet the country's health needs. Similar resolutions had not been proposed in relation to other countries facing conflict in recent years. Moreover, both the resolution proposed by Ukraine and the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation included divisive elements that went beyond WHO's mandate and unnecessarily politicized discussions. A consensus and united approach must be found in order to effect positive change on the ground. He expressed regret at the lack of transparency during the drafting of both the resolution and the draft resolution and the absence of a negotiating process among Member States to reach consensus. For those reasons, his Government did not support either the resolution proposed by Ukraine or the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation and had abstained from the vote.

The representative of NICARAGUA, speaking in explanation of vote, said that her Government had voted in favour of the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation, which reflected the genuine concern of the Health Assembly regarding the health emergency in and around Ukraine. Her Government had voted against the resolution proposed by Ukraine owing to the politicization and exclusion reflected therein, particularly in the fourth preambular paragraph and paragraph 6.

The representative of ALGERIA, speaking in explanation of vote, said that multilateral forums should be a place of dialogue, not confrontation. His Government was committed to international human rights and humanitarian law. It had voted against the resolution proposed by Ukraine owing to the political nature of the text. WHO was a specialized institution with a noble mandate of fostering cooperation to improve health and well-being. Other institutions would therefore be better suited to dealing with issues of peace and security, which should be addressed in a participatory and inclusive manner. A policy of double standards existed with regard to the consideration of issues of a controversial or political nature, which weakened the credibility of the United Nations, its specialized agencies and multilateralism.

The representative of INDONESIA, speaking in explanation of vote, said that the fundamental principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations and the provision of unimpeded humanitarian assistance had been reflected in the resolution proposed by Ukraine but not in the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation. All parties should continue efforts to achieve peace through dialogue and diplomacy. She expressed concern over the approach taken by various international organizations to address the conflict in Ukraine, which threatened to create unnecessary divisions on issues that were inherently technical. WHO was a multilateral forum in which consensus had always been central to the decision-making process; the "take-it-or-leave-it" approach adopted by a group of countries sponsoring the resolution was therefore regrettable and should be carefully reconsidered in the future. Supporters of multilateralism must respect the way in which the system operated. It was disheartening that some countries supporting the resolution proposed by Ukraine had abstained or voted against the draft resolution on health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan. The continuation of such double standards would further undermine a much-needed unified approach to addressing health crises in conflict situations around the world.

The representative of JAMAICA, speaking in explanation of vote, said that his Government had always been an ardent supporter of multilateralism and adherence to the principles of international law. He called on all United Nations Member States to take seriously their obligations enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular respect for the right of States to territorial integrity and sovereignty. Conflicts undermined joint efforts towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, the theme of the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly underscored the inextricable link between peace and health. All peoples had the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and access to functioning health systems. For those reasons, his Government had voted in favour of the resolution proposed by Ukraine. However, his Government had reservations regarding the inclusion of the third preambular paragraph, which exceeded the scope of the resolution and risked setting a dangerous precedent in a technical and non-political forum such as the Health Assembly.

The representative of CHILE, speaking in explanation of vote, said that his Government had abstained from the vote on the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation despite being in agreement with part of its content. The Russian Federation, which had invaded Ukraine, was proposing an initiative to protect the health of those in the aggressed country without considering the primary means of achieving that goal, namely an immediate ceasefire. His Government condemned the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in the strongest terms.

The representative of the LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, speaking in explanation of vote, commended the organizations of the United Nations system, including WHO, and countries that were offering health care and humanitarian support to people affected by crises in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen. He called for a peaceful and diplomatic resolution to the conflict in Ukraine, supported all peace negotiations between the parties concerned and urged the international community to refrain from any action that could fuel an escalation of tensions. His Government had voted against the resolution

proposed by Ukraine because there were multiple ongoing health emergencies and humanitarian crises around the world and because WHO must comply strictly with its mandate and not become a political platform.

The representative of the UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, speaking in explanation of vote, thanked Ukraine and the sponsors of the resolution proposed by Ukraine. All Member States that had voted in favour of the resolution had voted in favour of peace and health and against war and lies.

The representative of PARAGUAY, speaking in explanation of vote, said that the crisis stemming from the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine was deeply concerning, primarily owing to the implications for health and because of the humanitarian situation at such a critical juncture in the global post-pandemic recovery. Peace was a key prerequisite for the exercise of the fundamental human right to health. The resolution proposed by Ukraine sought to highlight the impact of the crisis on the lives of millions of people and the urgency of putting an immediate end to the hostilities. It was also in line with WHO's fundamental principles. Her Government had therefore fully supported the approval of the resolution but would consider its position on the issue in the event that, owing to exceptional circumstances, it was again addressed at a later date. Lastly, she urged the parties to the conflict to make use of international dispute resolution mechanisms provided for in international law.

The representative of COLOMBIA, speaking in explanation of vote, said that his Government had voted against the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation, which ignored the calls of the United Nations General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the International Court of Justice to immediately cease the use of force and the aggression against Ukraine. He reaffirmed his Government's commitment to international humanitarian law and its support for the efforts of the entities of the United Nations system and the international community to address the humanitarian and health crisis in Ukraine, which had been caused by the Russian Federation's military aggression.

The representative of CANADA, speaking in explanation of vote, strongly condemned the unjustifiable and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by the President of the Russian Federation. That hostile act constituted a blatant violation of international law and the rules-based international system and must not be normalized. The Russian Federation's aggression towards Ukraine continued to cause devastating health impacts in Ukraine and within refugee-receiving and -hosting countries and was also connected to the current global food crisis. For those reasons, her Government had voted in favour of the resolution proposed by Ukraine.

The representative of UKRAINE, speaking in explanation of vote, welcomed the approval of the resolution proposed by her Government, which would comprehensively address the health emergency caused by the Russian Federation and send a clear signal to the Russian Federation that it must stop its war against Ukraine and its attacks on hospitals and other health care facilities, and that it must respect international humanitarian and human rights law. It was important that the resolution drew attention to the fact that the Russian aggression against Ukraine constituted exceptional circumstances, causing a serious impediment to the health of the population, as well as having regional and wider-than-regional health impacts, and that continued action by the Russian Federation to the detriment of the health situation in Ukraine, at the regional and global levels, would necessitate that the Health Assembly should consider the application of relevant articles of the Constitution of the World Health Organization.

The cynical attempt by the Russian Federation to deceive the Health Assembly by proposing a draft resolution that pedalled its propaganda and would allow it to avoid responsibility for the atrocities committed against Ukrainians had failed. In voting against the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation, WHO had confirmed that responsibility for the health crisis in Ukraine lay solely with the Russian Federation. She thanked the sponsors of the resolution proposed by her Government and those Member States that had voted in favour of the resolution for their valuable support. It was only through

collective efforts that the health emergencies in Ukraine and elsewhere in the world could be addressed and the vision of health for peace and peace for health realized.

The CHAIR took it that the Committee wished to note the report contained in document A75/47.

The Committee noted the report.

Rights of reply

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the sanctions imposed on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela included broad exemptions and authorizations that allowed for the provision of humanitarian assistance and the commercial sale and export of food, agricultural commodities, medicine and medical devices to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. She therefore refuted the claims that the sanctions imposed by the Government of the United States of America prevented the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela from fulfilling its responsibility to make assessed contributions to WHO or any other international organization, which were expressly authorized under the sanctions programme.

The representative of the BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, reaffirmed the legitimacy of the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and her country's permanent representative. Her Government faced problems in paying its assessed contributions owing to restricted access to the SWIFT international payment system, as confirmed in the recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, which provided numerous examples of the challenges her Government faced in accessing its own funds.

The representative of FRANCE, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States and in exercise of the right of reply, recalled that the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Human Rights Council and the International Court of Justice had established that it was the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine – for which there was no legal, political or human justification – that had caused the health crisis in Ukraine. Attacks on health facilities, humanitarian convoys and vulnerable people had been documented by independent, impartial sources, including United Nations and independent civil society sources, and the related reports were widely available. The subject had not been politicized; rather, the Health Assembly was rightly discussing the objective reality of a catastrophic health situation caused by the Russian Federation's aggression. The vote of the Health Assembly had demonstrated that the ongoing dissemination of disinformation would not succeed.

The representative of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine was unprovoked and unjustified and in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Furthermore, the Russian Federation's actions were affecting the global food supply chain at a time when the world continued to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic and devastating climate change events. Her Government would continue to call on the Russian Federation to immediately and unconditionally cease its war of aggression and atrocities, honour the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and comply with international humanitarian law.

(For continuation of the discussion, see the summary records of the xx meeting, section x.)

The meeting rose at 18:20.

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