

Report of the Executive Board on its 153rd and 154th sessions, and on its Seventh special session

1. The Executive Board held its 153rd session from 31 May to 1 June 2023, its 154th session from 22 to 27 January 2024 and its Seventh special session on 10 December 2023. All three sessions took place with face-to-face meetings. This report summarizes their main outcomes.

153RD SESSION (31 MAY–1 JUNE 2023)

2. The Board adopted its **agenda** containing 17 items and subitems, with 16 accompanying documents. It adopted 10 decisions.

3. The Board noted the report of **the thirty-eighth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee** and the guidance provided therein.

4. The Board further noted the report of the second meeting of the **Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response**.

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

5. After discussions, the Board accepted the recommendations of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and noted the report on matters emanating from the **Agile Member States Task Group on Strengthening WHO's Budgetary, Programmatic and Financing Governance**. The Board further adopted three draft decisions on developing a template and recommended timeline for proposing resolutions and decisions, on future work to reform the Executive Board and the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, and on the election of the Officers of the Board during the intersessional period.

6. The Board accepted the recommendation of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and noted the report on the **implications of decision EB152(29) (2023)** on involvement of non-State actors in WHO's governing bodies.

7. The Board, concurring with the guidance of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, noted the **annual report on evaluation** and the report on and review of **hosted partnerships**. The Board considered the statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations and noted the reports on the appointment of the Internal Auditor and the meetings of two expert committees and one study group.

8. The Board appointed members to fill the five vacant positions on the **Programme, Budget and Administration Committee**, two on the **Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response** and one on the **foundation committees or selection panels**. It also appointed its representatives to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly.

154TH SESSION (22–27 JANUARY 2024)

9. The Board adopted its **agenda** containing 48 items and subitems, with 73 accompanying documents. It adopted nine resolutions and 23 decisions.
10. In his report, the Director-General discussed the priorities of promoting, providing, protecting, powering and performing for health and highlighted the forthcoming opportunities to shape the future of health emergencies through the pandemic agreement and the amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) and the future of the Organization through the investment round. The many responses included much constructive guidance and advice as well as discussion of the draft fourteenth general programme of work and related results framework.
11. The Board noted the report of the **regional committees**.
12. The Board also noted the recommendations contained in the **report of the thirty-ninth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee**.
13. The Board further noted the report of the third meeting of the **Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response**.

PILLAR 1: ONE BILLION MORE PEOPLE BENEFITING FROM UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

14. Having discussed two draft decisions related to **universal health coverage**, the Board noted the report and adopted the decision recommending that the Health Assembly adopt a decision on the development of a global strategy and action plan for integrated emergency, critical and operative care, 2026–2035. With regard to the draft decision on social participation for universal health coverage, health and well-being, the Board agreed that intersessional consultations should be held with a view to enabling a draft resolution to be submitted to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly for adoption.
15. Noting the report on **follow-up to the political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases**, the Board adopted the draft decision recommending that the Health Assembly adopt a resolution on increasing availability, ethical access and oversight of transplantation of human cells, tissues and organs and agreed to continue intersessional consultations on the draft resolution on strengthening mental health and psychosocial support before, during and after armed conflicts, natural and human-caused disasters and health and other emergencies.
16. With regard to **infection prevention and control**, the Board noted the reports and adopted the draft decision recommending that the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly adopt the draft global action plan and monitoring framework on infection prevention and control, 2024–2030.
17. Noting the report on the **Immunization Agenda 2030**, the Board called for further action to support “The Big Catch-Up” initiative; to advance vaccine equity through an increased focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized places, including humanitarian contexts; and to strengthen prevention and detection of outbreaks, in addition to response, all through an approach focused on primary health care and universal health coverage.

18. Assured that work would continue on implementing the **global strategy and targets for tuberculosis prevention, care and control after 2015 (the End TB Strategy)**, the Board noted the report on the subject.

19. The Board noted the report on the **road map for neglected tropical diseases, 2021–2030** and agreed that progress must be maintained and accelerated by sustaining political commitment, enhancing multisectoral actions through effective partnerships and mobilizing additional domestic and international funding to achieve the road map's targets.

20. Having discussed a draft decision related to **acceleration towards the Sustainable Development Goal targets for maternal health and child mortality**, the Board noted the report and agreed that intersessional consultations should be held with a view to enabling a draft resolution to be submitted to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly for adoption.

21. Welcoming the support for **accelerating national and global responses to antimicrobial resistance**, the Board noted the report and agreed to postpone the adoption of the draft resolution on that matter to allow for further consultations among Member States.

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

22. After a full discussion, the Board noted the reports on **WHO's work in health emergencies** and recommended that the Health Assembly adopt the draft decision on universal health and preparedness review and the draft resolution on strengthening laboratory biological risk management, as well as the draft resolution on health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem. The Board agreed to hold further consultations on the draft resolution on strengthening health emergency preparedness for disasters resulting from natural hazards during the intersessional period.

23. The Board noted the report on **implementation of resolution WHA75.11 (2022)** and agreed with the proposal to prepare an updated implementation report on resolution WHA75.11, to be submitted to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly.

24. Welcoming the progress on the **Global Health and Peace Initiative**, the Board noted the report and adopted an amended draft decision recommending that the Health Assembly adopt a resolution on that subject.

25. Recalling that the risk of transmission of poliovirus remained globally and reiterating its support for eradication but raising several issues including the need to vaccinate hard-to-reach children, the Board noted the reports on **poliomyelitis eradication** and **polio transition planning and polio post-certification**.

26. The Board discussed and noted the report on **smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks**, welcoming the conclusions and recommendations of the WHO Advisory Committee on Variola Virus Research.

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

27. Noting the report on **social determinants of health**, the Board discussed the progress of the WHO World Report on Social Determinants of Health Equity, which was due to be published in 2024, and supported the recommendations for Member States contained therein.

28. The Board, noting the report on **maternal, infant and young child nutrition**, expressed concern about the lack of progress in realizing the global targets of the comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition.

29. The Board discussed and noted the report on **well-being and health promotion**, adopting an amended draft decision recommending that the Health Assembly adopt a resolution on strengthening health and well-being through sport events.

30. The Board, having considered and noted the reports on **climate change, pollution and health**, agreed that intersessional consultations should be held with a view to enabling a draft resolution on that matter to be submitted to the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly for adoption.

31. Noting the report on **economics and health for all**, the Board welcomed the recommendations of the independent WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All (2021–2023) and agreed that further consultations would be held on a draft resolution on the economics of health for all during the intersessional period.

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

Budget and finance matters

32. After a constructive discussion, the Board concurred with the guidance and recommendations of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and noted the report on the **financing and implementation of the Programme budget 2022–2023 and outlook on financing of the Programme budget 2024–2025**, expressing appreciation for the document's new, shortened format.

33. The Board, concurring with the guidance and recommendations of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee, noted the report on the **draft fourteenth general programme of work**. Welcoming the consultative process used to develop the draft, the Board called for further consultations to be held in the intersessional period to finalize the draft fourteenth general programme of work to be submitted to the Health Assembly for approval.

34. The Board noted the report and concurred with the guidance of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee in respect of the report on **sustainable financing: WHO investment round**. The Board adopted the related draft decision and proposed that consultations should continue to be held on how best to support and conduct the investment round.

Management and governance matters

35. Commending the Secretariat's work in this area, the Board concurred with the guidance of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and noted the report on **prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment**.

36. The Board concurred with the guidance of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and noted the report on the **evaluation update and approved the Organization-wide evaluation workplan for 2024–2025**.

37. Noting the reports on **matters emanating from the Agile Member States Task Group on Strengthening WHO's Budgetary, Programmatic and Financing Governance**, the Board adopted the draft decision on that subject, as well as draft decisions on proposals for improving the effectiveness of the WHO governing bodies and on cost recovery mechanisms for voluntary contributions.

38. The Board concurred with the recommendation of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and noted the reports on the **implementation of the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors** and on the review of the **non-State actors in official relations with WHO**. The Board adopted an amended decision on the outcome of that review, including the discontinuance of official relations with one body. It also requested the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee to conduct further discussions regarding the proposal to admit the two entities listed in Annex 1 to document EB154/37 and to provide a recommendation on that matter to the Executive Board at its 155th session, through the fortieth meeting of the Committee, to enable the Board to finalize its decision.

39. Following extensive consideration and discussion on the **nomination and appointment of Regional Directors**, the Board noted the Note by the Legal Counsel on the process for the election of those posts. The Board adopted an amended decision that requested the Director-General to hold informal consultations with Member States with a view to preparing a consultation document for consideration of the regional committees on measures to enhance the transparency, accountability and integrity of the nomination process and, thereafter, to hold additional informal consultations with Member States, taking account of the outcome of the regional committee deliberations, and to submit a summary of the outcome of those consultations, including options for consideration, as appropriate, to the Executive Board at its 157th session. The Board agreed to delete a proposed draft decision on the process for the election of the Director General and instead requested the Secretariat to hold an informal consultation with Member States in relation to the possible preparation of a consultation document on that process.

Committees of the Board

40. Noting the report on the **membership renewal of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee**, the Board adopted the draft decision on the extension of terms of office and appointment of new members.

41. Five **prizes** and one **award** were conferred by the Board.

Staffing matters

42. The Board appointed Dr Hanan Hassan Balkhy as Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean and expressed its profound gratitude and appreciation to Dr Ahmed Salim Al-Mandhari

for his invaluable contribution to the work of WHO, especially his dedicated leadership and invaluable contribution to health development in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

43. The Board appointed Ms Saima Wazed as Regional Director for South-East Asia and expressed its profound gratitude and appreciation to Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh for her invaluable contribution to the work of WHO, especially over the past decade, her exemplary leadership, and her strategic vision to achieve tangible and measurable improvements in the health and well-being of the people of the South-East Asia Region.

44. The Board appointed Dr Saia Ma'u Piukala as Regional Director for the Western Pacific and expressed its profound gratitude and appreciation to Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab for her invaluable contribution to the work of WHO, especially her efforts to ensure continuation of the work and activities of WHO in the Western Pacific Region during a difficult and critical period.

45. The Board considered the **statement by the representative of the WHO staff associations** and the **report of the Ombudsperson**.

46. The Board concurred with the guidance of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee and noted the reports on **human resources** and **amendments to the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules**. It adopted two resolutions relating to parental leave and to standards of conduct for staff members, promotion, Global Board of Appeal and staff in posts subject to local recruitment salaries.

47. The Board noted the **report of the International Civil Service Commission**, expressing support for the recommendations contained therein.

Report on meetings of expert committees and study groups

48. The Board noted the report on the meetings of seven **expert committees** and on **expert advisory panels and committees and their membership**.

SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION (10 DECEMBER 2023)

49. The Board, expressing grave concern at the profound humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Gaza Strip, adopted the resolution on **health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem** and requested Member States, donors and international humanitarian and development actors to provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

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