

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER COUNSELLOR REBECA HERNÁNDEZ TOLEDANO, REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA, AT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE WHO, ON THE ITEM “REPORTS OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEES TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD” (EB158/3).
Geneva, 2 February 2026**

Mr. President,

Cuba thanks the presentation of document EB158/3, which reflects the concern of the States of the Americas regarding the reduction of the WHO programme budget for 2026–2027 and the consequent decrease in regional allocations.

The imbalance in the distribution of WHO resources among regions persists. Our region continues to receive the lowest allocation and is the one that benefits the least from effective financing.

This concern is further aggravated by projected reductions for the 2028 and 2029 cycles, which will deepen existing gaps.

These decreases will have direct negative impacts on critical areas such as regional vaccine production, epidemiological surveillance, and the capacity to respond to recurrent epidemics such as Zika, dengue, and chikungunya. They will also affect the implementation of approved regional plans, including those related to noncommunicable diseases and equitable access to high-cost health technologies.

It is necessary and fair to ensure an equitable distribution of resources and a response proportional to the real challenges faced by each region.

To this end, the Cuban delegation considers it a priority that WHO undertake, as soon as possible, a technical review of the distribution of the budget among regions, based on objective criteria.

Mr. Chair,

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Region of the Americas was the most affected in the world in terms of morbidity and mortality, which widened pre-existing disparities.

Our region currently faces major health challenges, such as the growing burden of noncommunicable diseases, gaps in the elimination of

communicable diseases, unequal capacities for timely surveillance and rapid response to outbreaks, and health threats related to climate change, among others.

Population ageing in the region will accelerate in the coming years at an unprecedented pace. By 2030, the number of older persons will exceed that of those under 15 years of age—25 years earlier than the global average.

For Cuba, these challenges are further exacerbated by the criminal economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States, which has a real, significant, and sensitive impact on the health sector.

Cuba is prevented from accessing financing and acquiring medicines, equipment, medical supplies, health technologies, vaccines, and essential raw materials for their production, resulting in the deterioration of several health indicators, including mortality rates. This illegal blockade costs lives.

Added to this is the relentless persecution by the United States against Cuban international medical cooperation, using slanderous and malicious narratives as a pretext.

It is absurd and cruel to attempt to deprive Cuba of its legitimate right to maintain a health system that guarantees free, universal, and high-quality medical care for our entire population, promoting a fairer and healthier future for the nation.

Despite these obstacles, Cuba will maintain its unwavering commitment to regional and international cooperation in health and to strengthening national and subregional capacities to address common challenges.

We will continue working with PAHO, WHO, and Member States to advance toward stronger, more equitable health systems that are better prepared to meet the needs of our peoples.

Thank you.