

61st Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), 76th Session of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas (Washington, D.C., United States of America, 30 September to 4 October 2024)

Report by the President (Dr María Teresa Barán, Minister of Health, Paraguay)¹

PART 1: TOPICS FOR GLOBAL DISCUSSION

Regional consultation on the draft proposed WHO programme budget 2026–2027²

The Regional Committee for the Americas discussed the draft proposed programme budget of WHO for 2026–2027. Member States welcomed the overall goal of an efficient, agile, accountable, and sustainable WHO able to fulfil the objectives set out in the Fourteenth General Programme of Work and applauded the Secretariat's efforts to improve transparency and its stronger focus on measurable impact at country level. The Secretariat was asked to prepare a report on how the 20% increase for the programme budget 2024–2025 had been used to make progress on critical issues. Concern was expressed about the proposed 20% increase in assessed contributions, and the Secretariat was requested to outline various possible funding scenarios for 2026–2027, including a zero nominal growth option. The planned increase in the allocation for the Region of the Americas was welcomed, but it was pointed out that the Region continues to receive the smallest allocation of the WHO regions.

Strengthening pandemic prevention, preparedness and response

The Regional Committee commented on the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body tasked with drafting and negotiating a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response during its discussion of a report on strategic issues between PAHO and WHO.³ The Committee also reviewed a report on the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005).⁴ Member States affirmed their commitment to the continuing negotiations of a new pandemic accord and underscored the importance of continued participation by the Member States of the Region of the Americas in the global negotiations in order to ensure that regional views are reflected in the text. The Committee welcomed the amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) and underscored the need to continue strengthening IHR core capacities. A decline in average core capacity scores in the Region was noted, and PAHO, WHO and Member States with well-developed core capacities were encouraged to provide support to enhance IHR implementation throughout the Region.

¹ The full report of the session (Document CD61/FR) and all documents, resolutions and decisions of the session mentioned in this report are available at:

<https://www.paho.org/en/governing-bodies/directing-council/61st-directing-council>

² [Document CD61/INF/3](#)

³ [Document CD61/INF/2](#).

⁴ [Document CD61/INF/4](#).

Process for the election of Regional Directors⁵

The Regional Committee also discussed the consultation document on the process for the election of Regional Directors, prepared by the WHO Secretariat. Member States expressed confidence in the current process for the election of the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau/Regional Director for the Americas. They also expressed willingness to consider potential improvements, such as the development of minimum criteria for the post of regional director and the adoption of a code of conduct for the nomination process. At the same time, Member States stressed the importance of preserving the Region's autonomy in the election of the Regional Director, particularly given PAHO's dual status as the Regional Office of WHO and as an independent organization within the inter-American system.

PART 2: TOPICS OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

End-of-biennium assessment of the PAHO programme budget 2022–2023/second interim report on the implementation of the PAHO Strategic Plan 2020–2025⁶

The assessment found that the Region is not on track to achieve the majority of the impact targets of the PAHO Strategic Plan 2020–2025 or the health-related Sustainable Development Goals, a situation that reflects the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Member States stressed the need for urgent action to regain lost ground and address the challenges highlighted by the assessment.

Roadmap for Developing the Strategic Plan of the Pan American Health Organization 2026–2031⁷

The Regional Committee endorsed the proposed roadmap for developing the next PAHO Strategic Plan, which will address the regional priorities agreed in the Sustainable Health Agenda for the Americas 2018–2030⁸ and the global health priorities defined in the Fourteenth General Programme of Work of WHO. Work to achieve the health-related Sustainable Development Goals will continue under the new Strategic Plan, which will be presented to the PAHO Directing Council/Regional Committee for the Americas in September 2025.

Strategy and Plan of Action to Decrease the Burden of Sepsis through an Integrated Approach 2025–2029⁹

The Regional Committee approved a strategy and plan of action for providing strategic and technical guidance to Member States on strengthening health systems to address sepsis through a wide range of interventions. The strategy is aligned with related global initiatives, including resolution WHA70.7, on improving the prevention, diagnosis and clinical management of sepsis; the Global Strategy on Infection Prevention and Control; and the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance.

⁵ [Document CD61/INF/2](#), annex.

⁶ [Document CD61/4](#).

⁷ [Document CD61/INF/1](#).

⁸ [Document CSP29/6, Rev. 3](#), and [Resolution CSP29.R2](#).

⁹ [Document CD61/5](#) and [Resolution CD61.R6](#).

Policy for Strengthening Equity-Oriented Health Sector Action on Climate Change and Health¹⁰

The Regional Committee approved a policy aimed at enabling the health sector to address current and future hazards posed by climate change to health, well-being and health equity. The policy is aligned with the WHO Global Strategy on Health, Environment and Climate Change and resolution WHA77.14, on climate change and health.

Plan of Action for Strengthening Information Systems for Health 2024–2030¹¹

The Regional Committee approved a plan of action to build on the progress made under the previous plan of action¹² in expanding and strengthening information systems for health. The plan is expected to significantly improve the effectiveness, comprehensiveness and responsiveness of health systems, prioritizing the first level of care. It is also expected to contribute to work under regional initiatives to achieve universal health coverage¹³ and recover progress towards the health-related Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁴

Policy on Long-term Care¹⁵

The Regional Committee approved a policy providing strategic and technical guidance to assist Member States in addressing the growing need for long-term care and enhancing their capacity to ensure access to such care. The policy is aligned with the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing Plan of Action 2021–2030 and with the regional Strategy for Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage.¹³

Strategy for Strengthening the Essential Public Health Functions to Accelerate Health Systems Transformation 2024–2034¹⁶

The Regional Committee approved a strategy to guide and support Member States in strengthening essential public health functions for health systems based on primary health care. The strategy builds on several related regional and global initiatives, including the WHO initiative on strengthening essential public health functions in support of the achievement of universal health coverage (resolution WHA69.1).

¹⁰ [Document CD61/6](#) and [Resolution CD61.R3](#).

¹¹ [Document CD61/7](#) and [Resolution CD61.R7](#).

¹² [Document CD57/9, Rev. 1](#), and [Resolution CD57.R9](#).

¹³ [Document CD53/5, Rev. 2](#), and [Resolution CD53.R14](#).

¹⁴ [Document CSP30/8](#) and [Resolution CSP30.R2](#).

¹⁵ [Document CD61/8](#) and [Resolution CD61.R8](#).

¹⁶ [Document CD61/9](#) and [Resolution CD61.R11](#).

Strategy and Plan of Action to Strengthen Tobacco Control in the Region of the Americas 2025–2030¹⁷

The Regional Committee approved a strategy and plan of action to continue the work done under the Strategy and Plan of Action to Strengthen Tobacco Control 2018–2022.¹⁸ The strategy aims to accelerate the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the “best buys” for preventing and controlling noncommunicable diseases in the Region. It includes measures to address the growing availability and use of e-cigarettes and other novel tobacco products, with a particular focus on their use among young people.

Strategy on Integrated Emergency, Critical and Operative Care 2025–2030¹⁹

The Regional Committee approved a strategy to support Member States in enhancing the accessibility, quality and safety of emergency, critical and operative care services in the Region. The strategy is aligned with resolution WHA76.2, on integrated emergency, critical and operative care for universal health coverage and protection from health emergencies and with various other global and regional initiatives aimed at achieving universal health coverage and strengthening the resilience of health systems.

Strategy on Epidemic Intelligence for Strengthening Early Warning of Health Emergencies 2024–2029²⁰

The Regional Committee approved a strategy to strengthen early warning systems of health emergencies in the Region through enhanced epidemic intelligence capacities. The strategy promotes a One Health approach and emphasizes the use of information from a variety of sources, including event- and community-based surveillance as well as traditional indicator-based surveillance. The strategy is in line with resolutions WHA73.8 and WHA74.7, on strengthening preparedness for and response to health emergencies.

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¹⁷ [Document CD61/10](#) and [resolution CD61.R12](#).

¹⁸ [Document CD60/INF/6](#).

¹⁹ [Document CD61/11](#) and [resolution CD61.R9](#).

²⁰ [Document CD61/12, Rev. 1](#), and [resolution CD61.R10](#).