

73RD SESSION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY – RESUMED

Australia's written statements on Agenda item 11.3

Australia thanks the World Health Organization (WHO) for its work to strengthen global immunisation efforts. The challenges in this field are many and diverse, and Australia commends the WHO for working consultatively with Member States to develop a holistic vaccine and immunisation strategy.

Australia strongly supports immunisation as a cost-effective public health intervention to improve population health outcomes, reduce child mortality, prevent severe disease and promote health security. Equity in vaccine availability is a priority for Australia and we were pleased to co-sponsor the decision to adopt the Immunization Agenda 2030 through silence procedure earlier this year.

The eight strategic priority areas in Australia's National Immunisation Strategy align with the strategic priorities in the Immunization Agenda 2030, and we encourage other countries to implement the strategic priorities of the Immunization Agenda through their own domestic policy.

Australia is committed to supporting access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines for the Pacific and Southeast Asia, through our recent commitment to provide further vaccine doses and technical support to our regional partners. The Australian Government has also committed to the COVAX Facility's Advance Market Commitment for developing countries, which will support vaccination in 92 developing countries.

Australia remains concerned by the global plateau in immunisation coverage. Globally, we continue to face challenges including increasing levels of vaccine hesitancy and disruptions to vaccine supply, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strong global and regional immunisation strategies are crucial to driving progress towards Universal Health Coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals. Australia looks forward to more detail on how the lessons learned over the past decade are being taken forward, in particular consideration of how countries can appropriately and sustainably finance improvements in immunisation.

Australia recognises that a coordinated approach to immunisation, progressed through aligned global, regional and national strategies, is required. We believe that key immunisation partners, such as Gavi, should continue to be included in this approach.

Strong governance, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that promote transparency and accountability will be crucial to the success of the Immunization Agenda 2030. These mechanisms should monitor the implementation of the global, regional and national strategies delivering the Immunization Agenda, with a focus on alignment and achieving common health goals. Australia looks forward to opportunities for Member States to engage on the development of these mechanisms.

Australia encourages all Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the Immunization Agenda 2030 which, as it firmly states, is a 'global strategy to leave no one behind'. As we have been profoundly reminded during the current COVID-19 pandemic, when it comes to communicable disease, no one is safe until everyone is safe.