

73RD SESSION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY – RESUMED

Australia's written statement on Agenda item 18

Australia aligns itself with the cross-regional statement delivered by Chile on gender equality, equity and rights. Australia fully supports the recommendations of the PBAC for the Assembly's consideration under the various components of agenda item 18.

Overall, Australia is pleased with the progress made by the World Health Organization (WHO) for financing the 2020-2021 biennium budget. We recognise this update provides figures dated to 31 March and that further progress on financing will have been made since. We look forward to further updates with particular interest on the base programme and emergency operation segments.

Australia supports efforts to ensure flexibility, in particular to address persisting low levels of financing for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and other under-funded areas, and we look forward to further information on prioritisation of funding allocations to address shortfalls across the strategic priorities.

As the figures provided are a reflection of the first 3 months of the 2020-2021 biennium we recognise the implementation rate is within the standard range at 10%. However, measuring the utilisation of funds against the Impact Framework will be crucial in assessing budget performance at the end of the biennium. We of course recognise the impact COVID-19 will have had on implementation of programmes and value future reporting on these impacts to help contextualise WHO's performance.

We also look forward to information on the development of the 2022-2023 biennium budget and the broader considerations on which Member States will need to engage - including, the proposed extension of the GPW13 to 2025 and how this may impact on operationalising and measuring outcomes through the Results Framework.

In regards to the update on the WHO Results Framework, Australia is encouraged by WHO's commitment to fill critical data gaps, and provide support for countries to build capacity and to manage reporting requirements. We would ask the Secretariat to support countries to disaggregate data to enable equity and gender analysis. We would also appreciate further information on the output scorecard pilot at the January Executive Board meeting.

We agree that the COVID-19 pandemic reinforces the need to measure preparedness, prevention and detection as well as countries' responses to health emergencies, and welcome the new 'detect and respond indicator in the Health Emergencies Protection index'.

In reference to the Human Resources Report, we fully support the Assembly endorsing the recommendations of the PBAC. We note further work will be needed across the organisation to bridge the gender gap, and to fill the number of long-term gaps at the head-of-office level in countries as a priority.

Finally, Australia supports the draft global strategy on digital health.