



European Union

Statement

WHO

73th Session of the World Health Assembly
(9-14 November 2020)

Item 11.3. Global Vaccine Action Plan
Defeating meningitis by 2030
Meningitis prevention and control

Geneva, 11 November 2020

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Chair,
Director General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

We thank Burkina Faso for leading the resolution on Meningitis Prevention and Control. The EU and its Member States consider meningitis as a very important public health matter, which deserves attention at global level.

We also thank the WHO secretariat for advancing work on Immunisation Agenda 2030, which will guide us in our work on immunisation over the next decade, and

* The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

thank the United States for advancing the resolution of which the EU is a co-sponsor. Immunisation is a corner stone of primary health care, saving millions of lives each year. Yet too many children around the world do not have access to this lifesaving intervention, a situation which must change.

Chair,

Immunisation Agenda 2030 should be a country focused, country-led strategy, with appropriate support from global health actors. We have seen the impact of an emerging infectious disease, Covid-19, directly in terms of deaths and illnesses, but also on health systems, healthcare workers and in particular on routine immunisation programmes around the world. WHO have sounded the alarm on this issue, noting that a substantial drop in the number of children completing three doses of the vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis can be expected in 2020, with significant knock-on effects on mortality and morbidity.

In order to end the pandemic that is raging around us, we will need a quality, safe, effective vaccine, which is available in an equitable fashion to all. As the Director General has reminded us so many times – “no one is safe, until everyone is safe.” The Covax Facility is a great step forward in ensuring that no one is left behind, and the European Union and its Member States are proud to participate in Covax, providing over six hundred million euro in funding.

However, we note that Immunisation Agenda 2030 contains only one reference to Covid-19, despite the fact that we will be dealing with the consequences of this pandemic for many years to come. We understand that IA2030 sets out the overarching global vision and strategy for vaccines and immunisation for the decade 2021 – 2030 that will be operationalised through regional and national

strategies, a mechanism to ensure ownership and accountability and a monitoring and evaluation framework to guide country implementation.

Chair,

The European Union and its Member States hope, and expect, to see both the impact of Covid-19 on routine immunisation, and the equitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccines themselves reflected in these supplementary strategies to IA2030. Widespread immunisation against Covid-19 is recognised as a global public good for health by Member States, and therefore we wish to ask the secretariat how this will be operationalised in these documents.

Thank you.

[470 words]