

WHA 73
Explanation of Position Statement
Resolution EB146.R10 Strengthening preparedness for health emergencies:
implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005)

The United States thanks the co-sponsors for preparing Resolution EB146.R10, *Strengthening preparedness for health emergencies: implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005)*. This resolution makes an important contribution towards the need to end transmission of wild poliovirus, safeguard against influenza pandemics, and respond to many other international health emergencies, urging full compliance with the International Health Regulations (2005); building core capacities to prevent, detect and respond to health threats; and invest in critical research to counteract health emergencies.

We wish to provide an explanation of preambular paragraph 25, which we expect WHO to implement pursuant to the sovereign right of nations to legislate on these internal matters.

Consistent with previously agreed language from a variety of UN documents and the *Geneva Consensus Declaration, recently adopted by 34 Member States*, we strongly support improved access to health and development gains for women, including sexual and reproductive health, and health care services, which must always promote optimal health, the highest attainable standard of health, without including abortion. Each nation has the sovereign right to implement associated programs and activities consistent with their laws and policies, free from external pressure.

We therefore call on WHO and the UN to refrain from interpreting references to “sexual and reproductive health” and related “health care services” as a means to make abortion an “essential” service in UN programs. There is no international right to abortion, nor is there any obligation on the part of States to finance or facilitate abortion.

As such, while the United States joins consensus on Resolution EB146.R10, for the reasons articulated above, we disassociate from preambular paragraph 25. We remain committed to the resolution’s objective of preparedness for health emergencies and strongly support women reaching the highest attainable outcomes for health, life, dignity, and well-being throughout their lives.

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