The Commonwealth of The Bahamas

74th WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY (2021)
AGENDA ITEM 13.1 – Global Action on Patient Safety
REFERENCE DOCUMENTS Document A74/10 Rev.1, A74/10 Add.4 and EB148/2021/REC/1, decision EB148(5)

AGENDA ITEM 13.8 - Immunization Agenda 2030
REFERENCE DOCUMENTS Document A74/9

Madame Chair

The Bahamas thanks WHO for its ongoing work elevating the importance and urgency of patient rights. We also recognize that policies and legislation are needed to place Patient Safety as a focal pillar of primary healthcare and universal health coverage. We have commenced multi stakeholder discussions in that regard and intend to include patient safety as a core element in Primary Health Care Services and Hospital Services. In a COVID-19 environment, we have also had to re-think approaches to family and friends visiting hospitalized loved ones given the potential emotional and psychological impact on patients.

We support the global call action in "A Decade of Patient Safety 2020–2030".

Madam Chair

The Bahamas has seen much gains in the immunization of vulnerable populations to vaccine preventable diseases over the past 3 decades, with more than 90% of our population vaccinated. Recent challenges with vaccine hesitancy highlights the need for continued vigilance. The global emergence of some diseases considered rare or even eliminated in the Americas means work on vaccine development, advocacy, procurement and delivery is not completed.

The Bahamas anticipates challenges in expanding immunization nationally as a direct consequence of access challenge restrictions due to COVID-19 restrictions and vaccine hesitancy.

Madam Chair

We thank WHO and PAHO for deployment of the Electronic Immunization Registry, an invaluable tool for reducing gaps and securing public trust in vaccines.

The Bahamas believes immunization against COVID-19 is key to ending the pandemic and adjustments to the Immunization Agenda 2030 should be considered in that light. WHO must ensure Equitable Access to vaccines as experiences from COVID-19

demonstrates lack of equity in access leads to disproportionate care delivery, morbidity, and mortality. Assistance from the COVAX facility is welcomed, but small economies struggle to access vaccines outside of the COVAX allotments which is the converse for large economies.

Lessons learnt from COVID vaccine development should be applied to diseases which disproportionately affect lower income countries which lack capacity for vaccine development and financing. Neglected tropical diseases and high mortality conditions should also be high priority in the new Immunization Agenda.

The Bahamas strongly supports implementation of Immunization Agenda 2030.