



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE  
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN GENEVA

**Statement by Fiji at the WHO Executive Board 152<sup>nd</sup> Session on Pillar 1 : Pillar 1: One billion more people benefitting from Universal Health Coverage : Item No. 5 :Universal Health Coverage & Item No.6: Political Declaration on the 3<sup>rd</sup> High Level Meeting of the UNGA on NCDs and Mental Health (Two Items to be taken consecutively)**

**Wednesday 1 February 2023**

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**Statement 2**

Madam Chairman/Mister Chairman

With the 2030 SDG Agenda fast approaching, in as much as some of our economies have scaled up efforts towards achieving UHC, some economies like Fiji are faced with disproportionate challenges. The challenges are profound which makes UHC a mammoth task to be achieved in our part of the region. However, we do not see this as an excuse, we're a resilient group of people, with this we noted the significance of cooperation and multi-sectoral approach including with financial sectors and partners to manage the health of remote island communities as in the Pacific to improve both our climate and economic resilience.

We commend the WHO leads on the Alliance on Transformative Action on Climate and Health (ATACH) which is supporting climate-resilient efforts including sustainable health systems. Fiji has been engaging with ATACH and will continue to capitalize on this, in particular how ATACH could play a role in engaging financial sectors to ease access to climate finance which has been a huge barrier to our progress. The volatile environment ecosystem posed by climate change and natural disasters has bearing on NCDs and mental health, thus making the need more pressing in meeting the 2030 Agenda.

We thank the Director General and the Secretariat for their report, which we generally accepted, we took note also of the recommendations. One issue is clear, and that is unless finance is not addressed, universal health coverage will be a goal that is reflected in laws and national plans only, but lacks the concrete operational steps to materialise them at the national level.

We also noted with interest Appendix 3 of the NCD Action Plan contained in document EB152/6 and perhaps what is missing in the guidance are the measures that affect the taxation, marketing and availability of alcohol which could be addressed via a footnote on page 17 to read 'interventions relating to excise taxes, marketing and availability of alcohol should take into account the beverage type in addition to alcohol strength'



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Asides which Chair, UHC will remain a priority for Fiji in meeting the needs of its population in particular women and girls irrespective of the distribution of our population in our maritime islands.

Finally, the SIDs Ministerial meeting on NCDs and mental health to be hosted by Barbados this year in the lead up to the General Assembly in New York should leverage SIDS in addressing this two issues wholistically and we look forward to engaging constructively including in the GA in ensuring that SIDS are not left behind.

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