

**Summary report from the Honourable Park Neunghoo,
Minister of Health and Welfare (Republic of Korea) and
Chairperson of the seventieth session of the WHO Regional
Committee for the Western Pacific**

WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific, Manila, Philippines — 7 to 11 October 2019

PART 1: TOPICS FOR GLOBAL DISCUSSION

- **Results framework for GPW 13: Programme Budget 2020–2021**

Member States welcomed the update on the impact methodology for the results framework for the global WHO *Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023* (GPW 13), adding that they looked forward to further information on the finalized indicators and scorecard, which will be discussed by the Executive Board in January 2020. They emphasized that the results framework plays an important role in making WHO more transparent and accountable, and in increasing the impact of transformation efforts in order to improve the Organization's response to global challenges and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Representatives also praised the attention to gender equity and rights, adding that the scorecard approach could prove to be helpful for other agencies. The importance of providing technical support to improve data to determine impact at the country level was also stressed.

In decision WPR/RC70(2), the Regional Committee noted that it had reviewed the report on *Operationalizing the Programme Budget 2020–2021 in the Western Pacific Region* and expressed appreciation for the alignment of budget priorities with those of GPW 13 and *For the Future: Towards the Healthiest and Safest Region*, which is the vision for WHO work in the Region for the next five years, developed by the Secretariat in close consultation with Member States and partners. Member States also expressed confidence that the plan to operationalize the programme budget would mean better results at the country level, but emphasized that increased resourcing at the country level should be linked to increased transparency and accountability. They also expressed interest in learning more about the prioritization process for global public goods and its relation to regional public goods.

- **Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health**

The Regional Committee considered an agenda item on ageing and health, with a panel discussion that included experts from countries at different stages of population ageing, namely China, Fiji, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore and Viet Nam. Member States in the Western Pacific Region, recognizing that those 60 years of age and older are the Region's fastest-growing population group, had identified ageing and health as one of the four priorities in *For the Future*. Following the panel discussion, the Regional Committee in decision WPR/RC70(3) requested the Regional Director to support Member States in preparing for and addressing the needs of ageing populations, including the development of a regional action plan on healthy ageing that is in line with global mandates, notably the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the WHO *Global strategy and action plan on ageing and health*. Member States also stressed the need to take early multisectoral action, including the provision of community support and home-based care and services, to ensure that older people live with dignity and respect. They also requested continued support from WHO for capacity-building in this regard and highlighted the need to include guidance on dementia in any plan that is developed.

- **WHO work in countries and the 2019 country presence report**

The Regional Committee expressed appreciation that regional reforms of the past decade, which put countries at the centre of all WHO work, have been maintained and will be strengthened in the coming five years under *For the Future: Towards the Healthiest and Safest Region*, the five-year vision for WHO work in the Region. Agenda item 14 focused specifically on WHO work in countries and areas, with a moderated discussion among Member State representatives and staff from the Regional Office and country offices that explored how WHO had effectively engaged partners to support Member States. The discussion involved video links with 15 WHO country offices. Five examples of WHO supporting Member States to engage partners were featured: 1) Viet Nam described the work of its Health Partnership Group; 2) Fiji shared its experience with the Health Promoting Schools Initiative; 3) Papua New Guinea spoke of timely specialized technical support for an outbreak of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 1; 4) the Philippines cited support for implementing mental health legislation; and 5) Cambodia discussed community engagement to combat malaria. Member States were also invited to provide feedback on the 2019 report on WHO presence in countries, territories and areas.

- **Global strategy for tuberculosis research and innovation**

Tuberculosis (TB) was considered by the Regional Committee under agenda item 13 on implementation of the End TB Strategy, with significant progress highlighted in implementing the three pillars of the *Regional Framework of Action on Implementation of the End TB Strategy in the Western Pacific, 2016–2020*. It was noted that national TB programme managers and other stakeholders are being consulted in the development of a global strategy for TB research and innovation, but there was no specific feedback from the Regional Committee on the planned strategy.

- **Global strategy on digital health**

Member States were invited to provide input for the development of a global strategy on digital health, identifying priority areas, especially where WHO should focus its efforts. No specific comments on the development of the global strategy were made in the plenary session of the Regional Committee; however, a side event was held on innovation through digital health, which provided a platform for Member States to share examples of innovations and to explore opportunities with the Region's new area of work on innovation going forward.

- **Global strategy to accelerate cervical cancer elimination**

Cancer control was addressed under agenda item 13, which presented progress reports on technical programmes. The valuable input Member States in the Region provided in June 2019 is being used in the development of the draft global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer, with clear goals and targets for 2020 to 2030, which will be reviewed by the Executive Board in January 2020 before being considered by the World Health Assembly in May 2020.

- **Involvement of non-State actors in the governance of WHO**

No comments were made at the Regional Committee regarding the involvement of non-State actors in the governance of WHO.

PART 2: TOPICS OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

- ***For the Future: Towards the Healthiest and Safest Region***

The Regional Committee in decision WPR/RC70(1) endorsed *For the Future: Towards the Healthiest and Safest Region*, the strategic vision for WHO work in the Region in the coming five years, based on extensive consultations with Member States, WHO staff and partners. Member States commended *For the Future* as a visionary stocktaking and priority-setting document that incorporated the voices of numerous health stakeholders and signalled a transition from a technical to a strategic approach in the work of the Organization. Several delegations noted with approval that the strategic vision aligned with and complemented their national health strategies, demonstrating the continuing importance of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. WHO's role as a staunch promoter of universal health coverage, centred around primary health care, was singled out for praise, as was the Regional Director's anticipation of the future health needs of the Region in redesigning the way the WHO will work for Member States. The Regional Director thanked representatives for their recognition of the former Regional Director's accomplishments and their support of *For the Future*, stressing that it was Member State contributions that gave *For the Future* its vision and strength.

- **Tobacco control**

The Regional Committee in resolution WPR/RC70.R3 endorsed the *Regional Action Plan for Tobacco Control in the Western Pacific (2020–2030)*. Member States expressed appreciation for WHO support in all areas of tobacco control, including policy development, taxation, and combating tobacco industry interference in the development and implementation of tobacco control measures that would allow them to further implement the *WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control* (WHO FCTC). Member States emphasized the importance of protecting young people from the harms of tobacco as well as new products and the emerging challenges they represent to ensure a healthy and sustainable future. In the resolution endorsing the Regional Action Plan, the Regional Committee urged Member States to further develop legal and other regulatory measures to implement the WHO FCTC, as well as measures to ban or regulate electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and emerging tobacco products, and to consider banning or regulating electronic non-nicotine delivery systems (ENNDS), as appropriate to the national context. In addition, the Regional Committee requested the Regional Director to provide technical support for implementation of the Regional Action Plan; facilitate dialogue and exchanges of knowledge, experiences, lessons and best practices among Member States; and report periodically on progress.

- **Protecting children from the harmful impact of food marketing**

The Regional Committee in resolution WPR/RC70.R1 endorsed the *Regional Action Framework on Protecting Children from the Harmful Impact of Food Marketing in the Western Pacific*. Member States said they appreciated the extensive consultation WHO had conducted in developing the Regional Action Framework and the comprehensive guidance it provides to enable healthy food environments for children, as appropriate to the national context. Some Member States noted that they may require more support from WHO for implementation, while others requested clarifications on products covered, definitions of marketing and implications for trade, specifically international trade agreements, which WHO is discussing with the World Trade Organization. In the resolution endorsing the Regional Action Framework, the Regional Committee urged Member States to use the Regional Action Framework to establish or strengthen policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing, as appropriate to the national context. In addition, the Regional Committee requested the Regional Director to provide technical support for implementation of the Regional Action Framework; facilitate

dialogue and exchanges of knowledge, experiences, lessons and best practices among Member States; and report periodically on progress.

- **Antimicrobial resistance**

The Regional Committee in resolution WPR/RC70.R2 endorsed the *Framework for Accelerating Action to Fight Antimicrobial Resistance in the Western Pacific Region*. Member States highlighted the importance of targeting highly susceptible groups, such as migrant populations and children, and sharing best practices and country experiences through collaborative bodies, such as the proposed Western Pacific consortium on antimicrobial resistance (AMR). In the resolution endorsing the Framework, the Regional Committee urged Member States to utilize the Framework to accelerate implementation of existing global, regional and national plans, as well as to access global and regional mechanisms and partnerships to strengthen overall country capacity to combat AMR; to raise the level of commitment and action through long-term, evidence-based and future-oriented planning; and to accelerate the development of universal health coverage as a sustainable platform for combating AMR. In addition, the Regional Committee requested the Regional Director to provide strategic and technical support to Member States in combating AMR; work with them in operationalizing the Framework; and report periodically on progress.

Submitted by:



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Date