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### Other information

**Venue**

Diamond Ballroom, Diamond Hotel, Manila, Philippines

**Distribution of documents**

All documents are available on the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific [website](https://www.who.int) and the WHO Events mobile app.

In line with WHO “green meeting” practices, printed documents are available only upon request at the WHO Enquiry Desk, located at the foyer in front of the Diamond Ballroom. Representatives are kindly requested to collect daily their documents, messages and invitations at their designated mailboxes.

**Hybrid meeting platform**

Following a hybrid format, sessions are in person and via the Zoom webinar platform. Instructions on how to access the Regional Committee SharePoint portal for the virtual meeting platform have been sent to all representatives. Individual Zoom links have been provided to those with speaking rights who will be attending virtually. Simultaneous interpretation for English, Chinese and French will be available on the Zoom platform and for in-person attendance.

**Video streaming**

The plenary sessions will be broadcast on YouTube with the relevant links available on the WHO Regional Office [website](https://www.who.int), the WHO Events app and the Regional Committee SharePoint portal. They can be viewed on personal computers, smartphones and tablets.

**Rapporteurs meeting**

The meetings will be convened daily in person and virtually from Monday (24 October) to Thursday (27 October) following the afternoon session at 17:15. Today’s meeting for in-person participants is in the Amethyst Room on the second floor of the Diamond Hotel.

Draft resolutions for technical agenda items will be available on Tuesday (25 October) on the Regional Committee SharePoint portal. Once rapporteurs have incorporated Member State input from discussions and written suggestions, these draft resolutions become conference papers and are posted on the SharePoint portal the morning they tentatively are to be considered for endorsement, that is: Noncommunicable diseases on Wednesday (26 October); Primary health care and Reaching the unreached on Thursday (27 October); and Cervical cancer and Mental health on Friday (28 October).

**WHO publications**

Selected WHO publications are available on the WHO Regional Office [website](https://www.who.int). A digital board and display booth can be found at the foyer in front of the Diamond Ballroom where representatives can view and browse WHO publications, including COVID-19 guidance documents and agenda-related materials. A leaflet featuring WHO Western Pacific regional publications from 2020 to 2022 is available for representatives. Limited copies of WHO Western Pacific regional action plans and frameworks published from 2020 to 2022 are available for free on a first-come, first-served basis.
I. PROGRAMME OF WORK (TUESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2022)

Agenda items 9:00–12:00

4 Address by the incoming Chairperson
7 Address by and Report of the Regional Director (cont.)
8 Programme Budget
   8.1 Programme budget 2020–2021: budget performance (final report)
   8.2 Programme budget 2022–2023 update
   8.3 Programme budget 2024–2025

Agenda items 14:00–17:00

9 Panel discussion on Communication for Health
12 Noncommunicable disease prevention and control

II. REPORT OF MEETINGS (MONDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2022)

First meeting

Outgoing Chairperson: Honourable Isaia Vaipuna Taape, Minister of Health, Social Welfare and Gender Affairs, Tuvalu

Incoming Chairperson: Honourable Bounfeng Phoummalaysith, Minister of Health, the Lao People's Democratic Republic

Item 1 Opening of the session (includes adoption of special procedures)

The outgoing Chairperson declared open the seventy-third session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific. He noted that this year would be the second time to conduct the session of the Regional Committee using a hybrid format. The Secretariat had prepared and circulated the draft special procedures to Member States via a note verbale on 27 June 2022 and a revised draft on 16 October 2022 for consideration and comments. Decision WPR/RC73(1) Special Procedures to Regulate the Conduct of Hybrid Sessions of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific, as amended, was adopted.

Item 2 Address by the outgoing Chairperson

The outgoing Chairperson welcomed representatives to the seventy-third session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific, noting the hard work of WHO, Member States and partners in the Region in achieving high vaccination coverage against COVID-19, which had reduced pandemic-related mortality and made possible an in-person session of the Regional
The WHO Director-General expressed satisfaction with the opportunity to meet representatives from the Western Pacific Region face-to-face once again, which was testament to how far the Region had come in the fight against COVID-19. He thanked the Officer-in-Charge and the staff at the Regional Office for continuing their work during a difficult period. He said that lessons learned from previous outbreaks of communicable diseases in the Region had helped many Member States to prepare and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Reported cases and deaths were declining and more than 80% of older people had been fully vaccinated – the highest rate of any WHO region. While there was light at the end of the tunnel, the Director-General urged Member States to prioritize the vaccination of all health workers and older people, expand access to antivirals, and increase surveillance, testing and sequencing. He encouraged Member States to use the six policy briefs recently published by the Secretariat to reassess national policies in accordance with the evolution of the pandemic. Given the importance of maintaining momentum on strengthening the health emergencies architecture, he urged Member States to engage actively in negotiations on the new international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response; invest in the Financial Intermediary Fund for Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response; and join the pilot phase of the new peer-review mechanism to evaluate country preparedness.

The Director-General recalled that, at the World Health Assembly in May 2022, he had outlined five priorities for the next five years to recover from the pandemic and drive progress towards the Triple Billion targets – promoting health, providing health, protecting health, powering health and performing for health – priorities that shared synergy with the meeting’s agenda and the For the Future vision.

First, the Director-General called on Member States to make an urgent paradigm shift towards health promotion and prevention by addressing the
root causes of disease and creating the conditions for health to thrive. The draft Regional Action Framework for Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Control in the Western Pacific would only be successful if Member States addressed noncommunicable disease risk factors, including the climate crisis, which was threatening the existence of several Pacific island countries and areas. To illustrate the problem, he told the story of a Tuvaluan boy with whom he had discussed the effects of climate change on his and his country’s fate.

Turning to the second priority of providing health, the Director-General was heartened to see that the Region was considering draft regional action frameworks for primary health care, cervical cancer, mental health and reaching the unreached, highlighting the importance of primary health care for universal health coverage.

On protecting health, he said that the pandemic had exposed vulnerabilities in global defences against epidemics and pandemics. In May, the Secretariat had published a white paper containing proposals for strengthening global health security, several of which were being implemented.

Regarding powering health, he outlined the new possibilities afforded by advances in science, technology, research, development and innovation in areas such as big data, machine learning and digital technologies. Harnessing those opportunities would enable WHO to reach more people and accelerate progress towards the Triple Billion targets and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Lastly, on performing for health, he said that the pandemic had demonstrated the importance of building a stronger WHO and thanked Member States for their commitment to increase Assessed Contributions to that end. The Secretariat would continue to improve WHO’s effectiveness and efficiency as part of its transformation, including by strengthening country offices to increase country capacities and ownership, with the WHO Academy playing a key role. The Secretariat would support the Region to fulfil those five priorities.

He congratulated Vanuatu on becoming the first country in the Pacific to eliminate trachoma, an outstanding achievement made possible thanks to the determination of the Government, supported by WHO and other partners. He encouraged other Member States to follow Vanuatu’s example by following WHO’s SAFE strategy for trachoma elimination. He concluded by thanking Member States for their continued commitment to serving their people and working towards a healthier, safer, fairer world.

Item 7

**Address by and Report of the Regional Director**

The Officer-in-Charge welcomed delegates to the seventy-third session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific. She congratulated the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteurs on their election and praised the staff of the Regional Office for the Western Pacific for their hard work over the past year.

She said that the Region had continued to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic while driving forward the For the Future vision, which was directly aligned with the Director-General’s global vision for the next five years. The Secretariat had outlined priorities to focus WHO’s work to achieve the Triple Billion targets, which would require an emphasis on primary health care. She highlighted the importance of harnessing the power of science and technology, strengthening WHO as the leading authority on global health, and supporting countries to generate impact and results, including through activities planned in the scope of the extension to 2025 of the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023.

The Officer-in-Charge applauded the impressive achievements in the Region over the past year, such as the rapid roll-out of COVID-19 immunization programmes and the development of emergency preparedness and response measures. She noted that the Regional Office had made a sincere
commitment to strengthen systems for reporting abuse, harassment and inappropriate behaviour in the workplace and build a more positive, respectful and inclusive workplace culture. While good progress had been made, there was much still to be done to achieve the desired targets.

The Director, Programme Management, welcomed delegates to Manila just one year after the first hybrid meeting of the Regional Committee, while also noting that the continued use of the hybrid format enabled more delegates and partners to participate, making the Regional Committee stronger and more inclusive.

The Director, Health Security and Emergencies, said that since 2016, countries and areas in the Region had been strengthening their health security systems while responding to public health emergencies, guided by the Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases and Public Health Emergencies (APSED III). Despite the Region hosting a quarter of the world’s population, case and death rates in the Region remained relatively low thanks to measures taken to combat the virus, and numbers were continuing to fall. However, several Pacific island countries and areas had experienced local transmission for the first time in 2022, and he warned against complacency with the arrival of winter and the possibility of new sub-variants. WHO would continue to support countries and areas in the Region to sustainably manage COVID-19.

He also highlighted other health emergencies addressed by WHO, including endemic diseases such as dengue, climate change-related emergencies, and new diseases such as monkeypox and other zoonotic diseases.

The Director, Programmes for Disease Control, said that WHO in the Region had focused on maintaining essential services by adapting new approaches, including in its efforts to provide COVID-19 vaccines to remote populations. High rates of COVID-19 immunization coverage had been achieved in most countries in the Region, particularly among health workers and older populations. The draft Regional Framework for Reaching the Unreached in the Western Pacific (2022–2030) would build on recent successes, and the draft regional frameworks on mental health and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) would seek to achieve greater impact in those areas in the next few years.

The Director, Data, Strategy and Innovation, said that the Regional Office was working to use the operational shifts described in For the Future to support Member States’ efforts to create a healthy future and promote health to support sustainable development. The Technical Advisory Group on Universal Health Coverage and the TAG Alliance were key to those efforts. The Regional Office for the Western Pacific had also facilitated Health Futures Strategic Dialogues to support planning, provided technical advice and support to help countries harness innovation, and developed a tool to identify workforce competency needs.

The Director, Healthy Environments and Populations, emphasized the continued threat posed to the Region by NCDs. The WHO Tobacco Free Initiative had helped Member States engage in policy dialogues, implement smoke-free legislation and develop strategies to strengthen cessation services. In the past year, WHO had worked with Member States in the Region to address the double burden of undernutrition and obesity- and diet-related NCDs, tackle new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products, develop policies, plans and programmes on ageing, and combat the health impacts of climate change.

The Director, Health Systems and Services, said that WHO in Region had been supporting Member States in their efforts to ensure robust health systems to expand universal health coverage. WHO had focused in the past year on transforming primary health care, including by developing, with Member State input, the draft Regional Framework on the Future of Primary
Health Care in the Western Pacific and providing technical support to Member States. WHO had also supported the implementation of the Action Framework for Safe and Affordable Surgery in the Western Pacific Region (2021–2030).

The Director, Pacific Technical Support, said that in 2022, several Pacific island countries and areas had experienced local COVID-19 transmission for the first time. Fortunately, the work initiated with the first iteration of APSED had helped to ensure their emergency preparedness. The work of the WHO-led Pacific Joint Incident Management Team had played a pivotal role in pandemic response efforts, and increased investment in national emergency medical teams had bolstered the response to natural disasters and disease outbreaks. WHO had also continued to support Pacific island countries and areas to face other threats and ongoing priorities, guided by discussions held at the 14th Pacific Health Ministers Meeting.

The Director, Programme Management, said that in January 2022, the Regional Office had begun to reflect on how to strengthen workplace culture, staff well-being and organizational efficiency. To that end, the Secretariat had focused on strengthening systems for reporting and responding to inappropriate conduct, simplifying and improving internal processes, and reshaping workplace culture through inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue. The Secretariat now had a full-time ombudsperson and a staff member working on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. While that work was far from over, the Regional Office had demonstrated its commitment to improvement.

She paid tribute to the staff at the Regional Office for their efforts to create an impact on health and improve workplace culture in such a challenging year, and thanked Member States and partners for their continuing support.

Interventions on agenda items 6 and 7 were made by the representatives of the following Member States (in order): Cambodia, Japan, Singapore, China, Brunei Darussalam, New Zealand and the Philippines. The Regional Committee will continue taking interventions in its session tomorrow.

III. OTHER MEETINGS

Tuesday, 25 October 2022

12:45–13:45 Side event: Towards more ambitious public financing to sustain the healthiest and safest region (Diamond Ballroom)

Wednesday, 26 October 2022

12:45–13:45 Side event: A crisis at our doorstep: Act now on antimicrobial resistance to save lives (Diamond Ballroom)

Thursday, 27 October 2022

12:45–13:45 Side event: Passage to innovation (Diamond Ballroom)