



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN Geneva

Statement by Pakistan at the 69th World Health Assembly (23-28 May 2016, Geneva)

Mr. President
Dr Margaret Chan, Director General, WHO
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. President,

We are happy to see you presiding over this meeting and are confident that under your able guidance we shall make progress.

Mr. President,

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an important opportunity to improve lives through comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centered set of universal and transformative goals and targets. The new Agenda builds on the MDGs and seeks to complete unfinished business. The SDG, as stated in the Declaration, are “integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable”. The inclusivity of the Agenda and its strong focus on equity aims to ensure that “no one will be left behind”.

SDG 3 on Health “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” is of critical significance. Prioritization of health in the SDGs is essential for sustainable development. Health and its determinants influence, and are influenced by, other goals and targets as an integral part of sustainable development. Health is positioned as a major contributor to the other SDGs, and reciprocally benefits from progress towards the other Goals.

Mr. President,

We welcome the life-course approach of Goal 3 and aspire to achieve its targets. Universal health coverage is universal in its importance to all members. The challenges we face can be resolved only by building health systems capable of providing integrated, people-centered care to all populations everywhere. This requires an adequately skilled and motivated health workforce, technical assistance and finances especially in resource-constrained countries, which often bear the brunt of the most serious health situations. WHO has an important role to play in strengthening national health systems by providing customized guidance and assistance.

Mr. President,

Programmatic challenges warrant urgent redressal. Addressing new health priorities without compromising existing programs requires careful balance. The non-communicable diseases are becoming a global challenge in developed and developing countries alike. They will sooner or later overwhelm the existing health system capacities unless rapid investments are made in disease prevention and treatment. There is also a need to better integrate humanitarian and development assistance with a special focus on accessible, affordable medicines and diagnostics.

Mr. President,

Pakistan recently launched the Prime Minister's National Health Insurance Program for impoverished populations as an important step towards UHC. We also recently completed a Joint External Evaluation of International Health Regulations with the Global Health Security Agenda. The External Evaluation assessed country capacity to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to public health threats. Pakistan is the first country in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and in Asia to volunteer for the Joint External Evaluation of 19 technical areas under IHR and GHSA. The gap analysis, as a first step, has helped us to formulate a road map to resolve issues but assistance is required to practically implement them.

Mr. President,

Pakistan has made major gains in eradicating polio decreasing cases to 10 from 3 discrete areas in 2016. We are also maximizing on the polio program assets and resources towards complementing immunization and health systems and ensuring emergency preparedness. Our Lady Health Worker Program is well utilized and being expanded to deliver basic health services directly to communities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and eventually universal health coverage.

Mr. President,

The implications of the SDGs on WHO's work is immense, placing new demands on WHO at all levels. For the Organization to play a leading role in implementation of the health-related SDGs, potential changes may be required regarding WHO's priorities and methods of work. For the alignment of the 13 health targets in the new Agenda with both WHO's program of work and most national health concerns, a more streamlined and integrated approach is desired. The integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals provides an opportunity for WHO to pursue a more active role in addressing the various health determinants. Adopted approaches need to be innovative, inclusive, results-oriented and responsive to the differentiated needs of countries. Progress on developing innovative R&D models delinking the cost of medicines from research and an international binding instrument is essential to ensure that we move from rhetoric to practice in realizing UHC.

Mr. President,

We look forward to receiving reporting on a regular basis on global progress towards achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Together we have, and together we can find solutions to common problems with the requisite will and determination.

Mr. President,

I will also take this opportunity introduce the candidature of Dr. Sania Nishtar for the post of DG WHO. Dr. Nishtar has extensive experience in public health both from within and outside the government and is available for meetings with all of you at the WHA.

I wish the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly great success in its deliberations.

Thank you.
