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Other information

Venue
Conference Hall, Regional Office for the Western Pacific

Distribution of documents
Electronic copies of all working documents and related material are available at the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific website: https://www.who.int/westernpacific/about/governance/regional-committee/seventieth-session

Representatives are kindly requested to collect other documents, messages and invitations daily at their designated mailboxes.

The Journal is posted daily on the website. Printed copies are available at the Enquiry Desk in the Conference Hall foyer. The official report of the session proceedings will be sent to Member States on or before 10 November 2019.

Rapporteurs meeting
The meeting will be held daily following the afternoon session at 17:15 in Room 403 (Emergency Operations Centre).

Internet access
Wireless Internet access is available throughout the Regional Office. The network name and password can be obtained from the Enquiry Desk.

An Internet cafe is located along the corridor of the lower lounge near the Conference Hall. For assistance, please contact IT support staff at the Internet cafe.

WHO publications
Publications related to the agenda of the Regional Committee are on display in the Conference Hall lounge and in the Regional Office bookshop. A digital publications catalogue is provided on a USB digital flash drive to all representatives.

Security
Please ensure your ID card is displayed at all times while on WHO premises.

Should you have any concerns, kindly contact the WHO Conference and Administrative Services Officer, Ms Nguyen Thi Minh Ly, at +63 2 8528-9608 (landline) or +63 920-963-5457 (mobile).

There is a no smoking policy on WHO premises. Likewise, smoking is prohibited in public areas in Metro Manila.
I. PROGRAMME OF WORK (TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2019)

Agenda items 09:00–12:00

4  Address by the incoming Chairperson
11 Protecting children from the harmful impact of food marketing  \textit{WPR/RC70/6}

Agenda items 14:00–17:00

9  Panel discussion on ageing and health  \textit{WPR/RC70/4 Rev. 1}
10 Tobacco control in the Western Pacific Region  \textit{WPR/RC70/5}

\begin{Verbatim}
Consideration of proposed decisions
\end{Verbatim}

\begin{Verbatim}
For the Future: Towards the Healthiest and Safest Region  \textit{WPR/RC70/Conference Paper No. 1}
Programme budget 2020–2021 update  \textit{WPR/RC70/Conference Paper No. 2}
\end{Verbatim}

\begin{Verbatim}
Please Note: Proposed decisions were distributed today as conference papers. Any amendments should be submitted in writing to the Enquiry Desk using specific language. These Conference Papers will be considered for adoption after the morning coffee break.
\end{Verbatim}

II. REPORT OF MEETINGS (MONDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2019)

First meeting

\begin{Verbatim}
Acting Chairperson (outgoing):
Dr Lam Pin Min, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Health, Singapore
\end{Verbatim}

\begin{Verbatim}
Incoming Chairperson:
Honourable Park Neunghoo, Minister of Health and Welfare, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Republic of Korea
\end{Verbatim}

\begin{Verbatim}
Item 1  Opening of the session
The Acting Chairperson declared open the seventieth session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific.
\end{Verbatim}

\begin{Verbatim}
Item 2  Address by the outgoing Chairperson
The outgoing Vice-Chairperson, filling in for the outgoing Chairperson who was unable to attend this year’s session, welcomed representatives and guests to the seventieth session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific. He highlighted actions from last year’s session and congratulated the new Regional Director on his election last year. He drew attention to action plans and frameworks endorsed at last year’s session on e-health, hospital planning and management, neglected tropical diseases, legal frameworks for health, and integrating rehabilitation into health systems. He said these plans and frameworks are having an impact at the country level and would continue to guide efforts to drive health gains at the country level in the coming years.
\end{Verbatim}
Item 3  Election of incoming officers: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteurs

The Regional Committee elected the following:

Chairperson: Honourable Park Neunghoo, Minister of Health and Welfare, Republic of Korea

Vice-Chairperson: Honourable Dato Dr Mohammad Isham Jaafar, Minister of Health, Brunei Darussalam

Rapporteurs:

In English: Ms Emma Jeanette Carters, Assistant Director, International Engagement on Healthier Populations Section, Australian Department of Health, Australia

In French: Dr Merehau Mervin, Deputy Director of Health, Department of Health French Polynesia, French Polynesia

Item 5  Adoption of the agenda

There being no objections, the provisional agenda was adopted by the Regional Committee (WPR/RC70/1 Rev.1).

RC70/INF/2  United States of America Territories in the Western Pacific Region

In reference to a request from the Government of the United States of America, as contained in Information Document 2 on United States of America Territories in the Western Pacific, and in accordance and consistent with Article 47 of the WHO Constitution and past practice, the Regional Director welcomed American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to participate in the Regional Committee in their own name with one seat to be shared by the three territories but without the right to vote.

Item 7  Address by and Report of the Regional Director

The Regional Director welcomed delegates and said it was a great honour to address the Committee as the seventh Regional Director. He noted that this year’s annual report spanned the terms of two regional directors, with many of the achievements coming under his predecessor whose leadership and legacy had transformed WHO into a more country-centred and efficient Organization. He highlighted the broad achievements of the past year, specifically noting disease elimination: with four additional countries and areas – Kiribati, Palau, Viet Nam, and Wallis and Futuna – having eliminated lymphatic filariasis; China having eliminated trachoma; and Malaysia having become the first country in the Region to be certified as having eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.

The Regional Director said his extensive country visits and consultations informed the development of For the Future: Towards the Healthiest and Safest Region. He said that the “white paper” will guide regional implementation of the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023 and introduce operational shifts, or new ways of working in the Regional Office and throughout the Region, that reflect the particular circumstances, existing capacities and unique mix of issues facing the Region in an effort to meet future challenges.

He highlighted three key messages that emerged during his travels across the Region: 1) WHO work needs to be tailored to address the future; 2) people and countries must be at the centre, and their needs and aspirations must drive the Organization’s work; and 3) by working together Member States will make the greatest progress in the concerns that unite all countries and areas. He said Member States told him they wanted WHO to focus on the most pressing health challenges: 1) health security, including antimicrobial resistance; 2) noncommunicable diseases and ageing; 3) the health impacts of climate and
environmental change; and 4) reaching the unreached – all of which are thematic priorities in the white paper. By taking this approach, the Regional Director said, Member States can “future-proof” their health systems and make the Western Pacific the world’s healthiest and safest region.

The Chairperson thanked the Regional Director and called on the representative from Kiribati who received recognition for its elimination of lymphatic filariasis.

Following the address by the Regional Director, interventions were made by the representatives of the following Member States (in order): the Philippines, Viet Nam, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Australia, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Kiribati, China, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, Fiji and Vanuatu.

Second meeting

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Chairperson:</th>
<th>Honourable Park Neunghoo, Minister of Health and Welfare, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Republic of Korea</th>
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<tr>
<td>Item 7</td>
<td>Address by and Report of the Regional Director (continued)</td>
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<td>As a continuation of the morning session, interventions were made by the representatives of the following Member States (in order): Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, the Federated States of Micronesia, Cambodia, Cook Islands, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, New Zealand and New Caledonia. In their interventions, the representatives congratulated the Regional Director on his report, and praised the accomplishments of the first eight months of his term, as well as the leadership and accomplishments of his predecessor. They noted the crucial role WHO plays in supporting Member States in their efforts to meet their health goals and those of their regional neighbours. They expressed enthusiastic support for the white paper, which was developed in consultation with Member States. The representatives emphasized that the four thematic priorities and the operational shifts contained in the white paper aligned with their aspirations and needs, and praised its approach of taking action today to address the issues of tomorrow. One representative noted the absence of a specific mention of sexual and reproductive health services in the white paper. In responding to interventions, the Regional Director thanked representatives for their recognition of the former Regional Director’s accomplishments and their support of the white paper, which he attributed to the extensive Member State consultations that informed its development. He said he appreciated the point raised by a representative about the absence of a specific section on sexual and reproductive health, adding that it was an issue that needs to be addressed. The Regional Director also said he was encouraged by the many initiatives and innovations underway in Member States that can be shared so that countries could learn from each other, suggesting a platform be developed to facilitate exchanges. He concluded by saying he could only be successful in his role as Regional Director if Member States were successful in reaching their health goals. In closing, the Chairperson asked the Rapporteurs to draft an appropriate decision.</td>
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Special briefing on polio and measles

The Director, Division of Programmes for Disease Control, presented an informal briefing on poliomyelitis (polio) and measles in the Western Pacific Region. She cited World Health Assembly and Regional Committee resolutions calling for the eradication of polio and noted that in 2000 the Region was certified as polio-free. Since that time, she said, the Region had maintained that status while responding to outbreaks in several countries. She also detailed the challenges presented by the emergence of vaccine-derived polioviruses since 2015, including cases in China and the Philippines. The Director, Division of Programmes for Disease Control, said WHO has been supporting Member States in: conducting risk assessments and national consultations; planning, preparing for and implementing outbreak responses;
facilitating resource mobilization, partner coordination and the deployment of experts; and helping strengthen outbreak preparedness and response capacities in the Member States, among other actions. She concluded by highlighting WHO recommendations, including rounds of mass polio vaccination campaigns, enhanced surveillance and improved performance of routine immunization programmes.

With regard to measles, the Director, Division of Programmes for Disease Control, noted the high mortality in recent outbreaks in the Region, especially in the Philippines where 556 children have died from measles in 2019 as of September. Since the 2017 Regional Committee endorsement of the Regional Strategy and Plan of Action for Measles and Rubella Elimination in the Western Pacific, she said efforts have been accelerated, citing the verification in September 2018 of nine countries and areas that had achieved or sustained measles elimination: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Hong Kong SAR (China), Japan, Macao SAR (China), New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and Singapore; and five countries and areas that had achieved and sustained rubella elimination: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Macao SAR (China), New Zealand and the Republic of Korea. She noted that China had achieved an historically low incidence of measles as of 2019.

The Director, Division of Programmes for Disease Control, concluded by stressing WHO's eagerness to support Member States to develop or update national action plans for measles and rubella elimination, to conduct high-quality preventive supplementary immunization activities, and to strengthen outbreak preparedness, as well as to conduct effective outbreak investigations and responses, including ensuring access to sufficient vaccine stocks. To further address these issues, she said WHO will develop a new regional strategic framework for vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization 2021–2030 to contribute to the implementation of the thematic priority, contained in the white paper For the Future, on "reaching the unreachabled” to protect people in the Region from communicable diseases, including polio and measles.

**Item 6  Address by the Director-General**

The WHO Director-General congratulated the Regional Director on a successful first year and his contributions to WHO's Global Policy Group. He praised the four thematic priorities contained in For the Future: Towards the Healthiest and Safest Region, noting that they are consistent with the WHO Thirteenth Programme of Work 2019–2023, the global transformation agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Citing his recent trip to the Pacific, the Director-General emphasized the need for urgent action to mitigate the effects of climate change, noting that the initiative on Climate Change and Health in Small Island Developing States was intended to ensure every Pacific island had a health system that is resilient to climate change by 2030.

The Director-General said the United Nations General Assembly endorsement in September of the political declaration on universal health coverage (UHC) was the most comprehensive health agreement in history, but that many countries would face great challenges to turn the commitment into reality. He commended the Western Pacific Region for recording the largest increase in service coverage of any WHO region between 2000 and 2017. While the Region was making progress on financial protection with fewer people pushed into extreme poverty by out-of-pocket health spending, he said it is was disturbing to see more people experiencing relative poverty due to spending on health and the resulting increase in inequality.

In line with Regional Committee agenda items, the Director-General also called on Member States to address the Region's disproportionate burdens from both antimicrobial resistance and tobacco use. He said the Region's new action plan would not only help tobacco control, but also address new challenges, such as the increasing uptake, especially among young non-smokers, of electronic nicotine delivery systems and novel tobacco products. He also discussed the importance of efforts to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing
and congratulated the Regional Director for addressing the needs of the Region’s growing ageing populations with a panel discussion during the session.

The Director-General concluded by emphasizing that the WHO transformation was designed to support Member States to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals, with country needs driving the Organization’s work at all levels. He then summarized the three challenges for WHO in the coming year: strengthening primary health care; reducing inequality and reaching the most vulnerable; and tackling the challenges of climate change.

Item 8 Programme budget 2018–2019: budget performance (interim report)

The Director, Programme Management, presented the interim report on the Programme Budget 2018–2019 for the Western Pacific Region. He said the approved budget of US$ 285.9 million was increased to US$ 319.6 million, mainly for polio eradication, with total funds available of US$ 274.6 million, which had risen to US$ 283.8 million as of the end of September 2019.

As achieved in the previous biennium, the Director, Programme Management, said he expected an implementation rate of 98% of total available resources by the end of this biennium, making the Region among the highest globally. He said the Region prioritized accountability and control, as evidenced by the satisfactory ratings in the two audits in 2019, with strengthened management, training, communications and monitoring of potential risks. He noted that gender balance and geographical distribution of staff continue to be priorities, with the Region achieving gender parity for the first time in September 2019 with 89 female and 88 male staff.

The Director, Programme Management, noted that of 107 programme outputs, only one under Violence and Injury Prevention was assessed as “at risk” due to a lack of funding in the early part of the biennium, which was recently addressed by incorporating the activity into a broader programme of system strengthening and service coverage improvement under the Regional Action Framework on Improving Hospital Planning and Management in the Western Pacific.

Interventions were made by the representatives of the following Member States (in order): Australia, Viet Nam, Japan, the United States of America, Papua New Guinea, China, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea.

In their interventions, representatives thanked the Secretariat for the comprehensive interim report on budget performance for the biennium, saying it provided a clear account of funding and expenditures. They noted strong implementation of the Programme Budget 2018–2019, as well as a decrease in the funding gap between the working allocation and available resources as compared with the previous biennium. They also expressed appreciation for resource mobilization that led to an increase in voluntary contributions, much of it to combat a polio outbreak in Papua New Guinea. The representatives welcomed the full and timely response to the recommendations contained in audit reports of the Regional Office and a country office and praised the overall transparency and accountability in the Region.

The Director, Programme Management, in responding to the interventions thanked the representatives for their guidance. He said transparency in budget implementation and monitoring is a high priority, and that more detailed information on expenditures at the country level is available on the WHO global web portal. He also said that financial gaps for some categories that do not always attract adequate resources, such as noncommunicable diseases, necessitate stronger efforts at resource mobilization and the prioritization of spending.

The Director, Administration and Finance, said many of the same points mentioned by representatives, such as transparency and accountability, cost efficiencies, and travel and staff costs, are under continuous review in the Regional Office and country offices. He noted that networks of programme management and administrative officers meet regularly to monitor resources and expenditures, with a view towards maximizing cost efficiencies. He concluded by noting that audits,
which were closed in a satisfactory manner, were always useful as they offered a means to improve audited offices as well as the entire regional organization.

**Item 8 Programme budget 2020–2021 update**

The Director, Programme Management, introduced *Operationalizing the Programme Budget 2020–2021 in the Western Pacific Region*, which detailed regional plans to implement the biennial budget. He noted that the World Health Assembly in May 2018 adopted the WHO Thirteenth General Programme of Work 2019–2023 (GPW13), and the following year approved the *Programme Budget 2020–2021*, which focused on global implementation of GPW 13. He said that *For the Future: Towards the Healthiest and Safest Region* addressed both the Region’s plan to implement GPW 13 and the global transformation agenda. The Director, Programme Management, said that regional plans to operationalize the Programme Budget were developed according to Member State priorities, including the four thematic priorities and operational shifts identified in *For the Future*. He said that details on country-specific flagship programmes, common regional focus areas and major activities are reflected under each thematic priority in *For the Future*.

Interventions were made by the representatives of the following Member States (in order): Singapore, Viet Nam, Fiji, Australia, Japan, the United States of America and China.

In their interventions, representatives welcomed the alignment of the white paper, *For the Future*, with the Programme Budget 2020–2021 and GPW 13 with the four thematic priorities of the white paper guiding WHO work in the Region over the next five years. They also expressed confidence that the plan to operationalize the programme budget would mean greater resources and better results at the country level, but added that increased resourcing at the country level should be linked to increased transparency and accountability.

The Director, Programme Management, thanked Member States for their guidance and comments. He said that WHO appreciated their emphasis on efficiency and transparency, as well as full alignment with GPW 13 and the country-focused and evidence-based outcomes and results. He explained that these are all principles that WHO will continue to follow and strengthen in the biennium.

With regard to an intervention about technical advisory groups, he said that the purpose of the proposal in *For the Future* is to use technical advisory groups when appropriate and requested by Member States to provide technical and strategic guidance, especially in the areas where progress is slow, such as NCDs and climate change. However, he said that national flagship programmes and regional shared focus areas and activities are well integrated and moving in the strategic direction as defined by *For the Future* and GPW 13. He said that, with the support of Member States, WHO is now moving towards operational planning and will make best efforts to reflect Member State guidance, as was discussed in the morning, to shift to the WHO transformation and be more efficient to deliver results in the country and contribute to the “triple billions” targets in GPW 13. He said that this was the overall purpose of the technical working groups and the next steps.

The Director, Planning, Resource Coordination and Performance Monitoring at WHO headquarters, addressing a specific intervention, said that expenditures will continue to be tracked in the future by programme areas (for instance malaria and tuberculosis) because it allows for better analysis of spending versus impact.

In closing, the Chairperson asked the Rapporteurs to draft an appropriate decision.
III. OTHER MEETINGS

Tuesday, 8 October 2019

12:45–13:45 Health for poverty reduction (Conference Hall)

Wednesday, 9 October 2019

12:45–13:45 Innovation through digital health (Conference Hall)

Thursday, 10 October 2019

12:45–13:45 Safe and affordable surgery (Conference Hall)