



Delegation of the European Union



Permanent Representation of Spain

**WHO  
Executive Board  
126th Session  
(Geneva, 18 - 23 January 2010)**

**Statement by**

**Dr M. Kökény, Hungary**

**on behalf of the European Union**

**"Report by the Director General"**

**(agenda item 2)**

**Geneva, 18 January 2010**

**Check against delivery**

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"Report by the Director General"  
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Thank you, Mr/Ms Chair.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

To begin with, the European Union would like to take this opportunity to express its deep sympathy to the people of Haiti affected by the enormous tragedy of 12 January. We would like to extend to them our deep condolences and send words of support in these times. EU would also like to share compassion with UN workers in Haiti also afflicted by the earthquake. We all should manifest a common solidarity and we should spare no efforts of the international community aimed at improving the well-being and health situation of those in need.

We are facing up to an agenda full of prominent global health issues, and it is a challenge to address them all in one week. Nevertheless, it also gives us the opportunity to respond to issues that have a direct impact on the welfare and health of our citizens.

We would like to thank the Director-General for her report, which reflects the challenges that the Organization and all its Member States are facing in the field of health, and ways to move forward in several areas.

The European Union is ready to collaborate constructively with the WHO.

First of all, the EU would like to thank the Secretariat for the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Report: sharing of influenza viruses and access to vaccines and other benefits. The EU actively participated in its preparatory meetings. The EU appreciates the efforts and leadership of the Director-General and the Secretariat, and encourages them to continue working together with stakeholders involved in this process to take forward the non-agreed parts of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework.

Communication between national focal points and WHO IHR contact points according to the International Health Regulations has worked as an effective channel for information exchange and dissemination. Regulations have proved to be an adequate legal framework to guide the response to influenza pandemic, and its Emergency Committee provides an important tool to the Director General. The EU emphasises the importance to continue establishing alliances with other international and intergovernmental bodies, especially with those who play an active role in the transport sector.

The EU highly appreciates the extraordinary efforts and competent global leadership of WHO from the outset of the H1N1 pandemic outbreak. We understand that WHO is already considering to initiate an independent evaluation of the organisation's handling of the pandemic. We welcome such an evaluation, since it would be a significant step to make use of experiences and to improve the preparedness for future pandemics.

EU countries support the leadership of WHO in the monitoring of the achievement of the health-related MDGs in the High Level Event on the MDGs to be held in New York on September 2010.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe and its member countries have been addressing this matter by initiatives aiming at strengthening national health systems towards universal access to primary health care and the adequate financing mechanisms in order to ensure social health protection.

As for the international recruitment of health personnel, we would like to emphasize our interest in improving the performance of data gathering, processing and monitoring systems on health personnel, necessary to formulate policies based on objective information. To this end, the role of the WHO is critical to support Member States and to work to provide a solid framework to the voluntary code of good practice, taking into account that in the EU there are source countries and destination countries alike, as well as other countries encompassing both categories. The establishment of sustainable workforce policies in health care will be a major challenge for all WHO Member States for the next decades.

As regards food safety, the EU continues to support global initiatives promoted by WHO in this area. However, these actions should cover the entire food chain. In addition, the EU stresses the importance WHO's to cooperate proactively (AT) with the CODEX Alimentarius Commission and the significant role of nutrition in the development of noncommunicable diseases.

With respect to the implementation of the global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, the EU, in collaboration with the European Region Countries, underlines the leading role of the WHO in realizing the comprehensive work on noncommunicable diseases, in monitoring, prevention, control and research in this field, and in the use of social determinants of health. This is increasingly relevant for the developing countries. The EU notes that the 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Health Promotion held in Nairobi put forward a strong document, a Call to Action. The EU proposes to WHO the implementation of the key recommendations of it.

The EU welcomes the WHO report on Strategies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol as a means to lower the burden of noncommunicable diseases, respecting the different contexts and traditions of Member States.

Regarding the report of the Secretariat on availability, safety and quality of blood products, the EU believes that it is important that WHO should assist countries to strengthen their health systems in order to improve the competence of National Regulatory Authorities and National Control Laboratories for the manufacturing of

plasma and blood-derived products, in accordance with internationally recognised regulatory standards.

As for the international chemicals management, the EU supports the proposals made by the Secretariat, which are consistent with the guidelines followed by the European Union.

Health consequences of climate change, are well known, and the EU encourages WHO to continue to make efforts to highlight the consequences of climate change for public health on the international agendas.

The EU welcomes the reinforced efforts of the DG to discuss current challenges with regard to financing and governance of WHO – a discussion that is closely linked to the global health architecture of today. We remain deeply committed to maintaining and reinforcing the relevance and capacity of WHO as the world's leading global health actor. In this regard, it seems to be crucial to strengthen the governance and central financial management of WHO. The EU is looking forward to participating in the work concerning the WHO Programme Budget for 2012-2013 where these important issues will play out.

We would also like to underline that the EU is looking forward to closely follow the establishment and the work of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee. We hope that this Committee will prove to be a highly useful and efficient tool aiming at reinforcing the accountability of WHO.

Finally, the EU acknowledges the WHO's contribution towards the UN reform process and "Delivering as One" and encourages the Director General to continue to show leadership within the UN family to improve efficiency and effectiveness"

Thank you Mr/Ms Chair.