



**Pan American  
Health  
Organization**



**World Health  
Organization**  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE  
**Americas**

**61st Directing Council  
76th Session of the Regional Committee of WHO  
for the Americas**  
Washington, D.C., 30 September–4 October 2024

CD61/DIV/5

Original: English/Spanish

**CLOSING REMARKS BY DR. JARBAS BARBOSA DA SILVA JR.,  
DIRECTOR OF THE PAN AMERICAN SANITARY BUREAU  
AND REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION FOR THE AMERICAS**

**4 October 2024**

Honorable President of the 61st Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Dr. Maria Teresa Barán, Minister of Health of Paraguay;

Honorable Vice Presidents of the 61st Directing Council, Dr. Michael R. Darville of the Bahamas and Dr. Francisco José Alabí Montoya of El Salvador;

Honorable Rapporteur, Dr. Carla Marina Paredes Reyes, State Secretary of Health of Honduras;

Honorable President of the 174th Session of the Executive Committee, Dr. Adriana Alfonso, Director General of Health of Uruguay;

Esteemed Dr. Derek Walton, Legal Counsel of WHO, who participated in the head table with us this week;

PAHO's Legal Counsel, Dr. Miguel Burnier da Silveira, who served as Secretary ex officio of this Directing Council;

Honorable ministers and secretaries of health of PAHO Member States;

Distinguished delegates of Member States;

Eminent members of the diplomatic corps;

Representatives of non-State actors in official relations with PAHO and WHO;

Fellow PAHO and WHO colleagues;

As we end this 61st Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization, I have a deep sense of satisfaction with the commitment you all have for this Organization.

During these past five days, you have successfully navigated through 46 agenda items, five final reports, and three progress reports, and have approved 14 resolutions.

On behalf of the entire Pan American Sanitary Bureau (the Bureau), I wish to extend my sincerest thanks and heartfelt appreciation to you all for your individual and collective contributions to delivering on this week's extensive tasks.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take a moment to briefly recapture the highlights of this week's deliberations.

During this week you discussed and approved vital resolutions related to a policy on climate change and health; a strategy and plan of action to decrease the burden of sepsis; a plan of action for strengthening information systems for health; a strategy to strengthen the essential public health functions; a strategy and plan of action to strengthen tobacco control; a strategy on emergency, critical, and operative care, and finally, a strategy on epidemic intelligence and health emergencies. We witnessed technical excellence in your deliberations and a smooth approval of the proposed mandates, which is a clear result of the consultative process conducted by the Bureau.

We also held five briefing sessions during the week. One was on the Elimination Initiative, where we heard from Member States on the implementation of innovations and best practices for communicable diseases in the Region of the Americas. Another was on the Pandemic Accord, where we heard about the state of the current negotiations and timelines to agree on a final instrument, highlighting the key articles in the accord, including its global and regional implications. Another briefing session was on telehealth for all, where we discussed opportunities for bridging gaps, enhancing care, and advancing equity. PASB has put together telehealth kits to support Member States in the implementation and expansion of their telehealth systems as a way to strengthen primary health care.

We also held a briefing session regarding the WHO Investment Round where we celebrated the contributions of the Region of the Americas to a sustainable WHO. The last briefing session highlighted the elimination of cervical cancer and how to change the trend of one of the main causes of death in women in our Region. We have HPV vaccines, diagnostic tools for early detection, and ablation treatment available through our Regional Revolving Funds and we can save the lives of more than 40 000 women per year in our Region.

The Member States also approved a resolution on the closure of our Pan American Center for Perinatology, Women and Reproductive Health (CLAP) in Uruguay, which will continue to provide technical cooperation to countries on these key issues from our Headquarters here in Washington, D.C.

The Bureau presented the roadmap for the development of the Strategic Plan 2026-2031, which will chart the course for technical cooperation in health during this period. The document to be presented in 2025 will incorporate best practices in strategic planning and results-based management, as well as lessons learned from the current plan.

They also approved incentives to increase the regional production of vaccines, medicines, and other essential technologies within the framework of the charge assessed on the procurement of public health supplies. The Member States also approved the use of budget surpluses in some key underfunded technical programs.

The Member States also carefully reviewed the final and progress reports on a number of strategies and action plans that are still being implemented or have already been completed. We all agree that, while we continue to build on our collective successes, much remains to be done to address persistent challenges.

I wish to convey special thanks and deep appreciation to our President, the Minister Maria Teresa Barán of Paraguay, for the firmness and efficiency with which she has presided over this 61st Directing Council of PAHO. Thank you for keeping us on course to complete the week's program with respect, courtesy, and sensitivity. I would also like to express our most sincere thanks to the President of the 174th session of the Executive Committee, Dr. Adriana Alfonso, Director General of Health of Uruguay, and to our rapporteur, Dr. Carla Marina Paredes Reyes, Secretary of Health of Honduras.

I would also like to thank our Legal Counsel, Dr. Miguel Burnier da Silveira, for his dedicated work as Secretary of the 61st Directing Council and all our staff, including the Governing Bodies Office, represented by its Senior Advisor, Mr. Nicolás Lagomarsino, for their tireless efforts and excellent contributions both during this week's meeting and in the many previous weeks.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to our talented team of interpreters without whom we would not be able to carry out our work so smoothly, and also to our team of translators who have ensured that all the documents of this meeting are in the official languages of our Organization.

As we conclude today, I would like to respectfully ask that we recommit to the Pan American values of equity, excellence, solidarity, respect, and integrity. Once again, I congratulate you all for your commitment and excellence in this week's deliberations. Have a good trip back to your respective homes.

Thank you very much.

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