



## Childhood obesity and tuberculosis on agenda on first day of World Health Assembly

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The Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly, WHO's annual global meeting of ministers and senior health officials, opened on 19 May 2014. Addressing the delegates, Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General, voiced her deep concern about the increase worldwide of childhood obesity, with numbers climbing fastest in developing countries. "As the 2014 World Health Statistics report bluntly states, Our children are getting fatter, she said. To gather the best possible advice on dealing with this crisis, Dr Chan announced that she has established a high-level Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity. The Commission - co-chaired by Sir Peter Gluckman, Chief Science Advisor to New Zealand's Prime Minister, and Dr Sania Nishtar, founder of Pakistan's health policy think tank, Heartfile - will produce a consensus report specifying which approaches are likely to be most effective in different contexts around the world. The recommendations of the report will be announced at next years Health Assembly. Member States approved a resolution endorsing a new global strategy and targets for tuberculosis (TB) prevention, care and control after 2015. The strategy aims to end the global TB epidemic, with targets to reduce TB deaths by 95% and to cut new cases by 90% by 2035. It sets interim milestones for 2020, 2025 and 2030. Highlights for the European Region  
On 18 May 2014 Veronika Skvortsova, Minister of Health of the Russian Federation, Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General, and Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe, signed a country cooperation strategy between the Russian Federation and WHO, providing a medium-term vision for technical cooperation to support the countrys national health policy, strategy, action plan and related efforts, in line with Health 2020. Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, Minister of Health of Lithuania, was elected Vice-President of the Health Assembly. Vasily Zharko, Minister of Health of Belarus, met Zsuzsanna Jakab to discuss progress on tobacco control and reducing alcohol consumption. WHO support on work to strengthen the countrys health system to address noncommunicable diseases was also discussed. The Minister highlighted Belaruss progress in reducing maternal and infant mortality, and noted that greater focus on primary health care would improve health outcomes for noncommunicable diseases. Discussions between Philippos Patsalis, Minister of Health of Cyprus, and Zsuzsanna Jakab focused on health system reform, considering the countrys overstretched hospital system and the high level of out-of-pocket payment by individuals for health services. The Regional Director offered WHO support and guidance in the reform process, through expertise in public health and health financing. In a plenary speech, the delegation of the Russian Federation expressed appreciation for the Director-Generals focus on reform and the increased effectiveness of WHO, and explained how the Russian Federation had also made far-reaching health system changes - in diagnostics, e-health and individual health checks - to improve health outcomes in the country. The delegation also referred to the opening of a WHO centre in Moscow, underlining the Russian Federations commitment to addressing noncommunicable diseases. The Finnish delegation spoke in plenary of the need for global cooperation to address climate change, with action also required at the local level to create safe environments - for example, for cycling and promoting exercise. The delegation also highlighted the need to strengthen health system capacity, improve sustainability and reduce health inequalities. A speech of the delegation of the United Kingdom emphasized the need for international cooperation to address antimicrobial resistance, increasing levels of dementia in ageing populations and violence against women - particularly female genital mutilation. Specifically, the delegation called on the Health Assembly to take action to improve the control of antibiotic use, create a global database to monitor such use and develop a new class of antibiotics by 2020. In a plenary speech, Hermann Gröhe, Federal Minister of Health of Germany, spoke of the negative health effects of climate change; these will affect all, but in particular the vulnerable and disadvantaged. The Minister drew attention to Germanys commitment to addressing environmental and health issues, hosting the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, and funding a project in central Asia and south-eastern Europe on protecting health from climate change. A bilateral meeting with Bartosz Arlukowicz, Minister of Health of Poland, and Zsuzsanna Jakab covered a wide range of issues, including pricing of medicines, reporting on progress in implementing Health 2020, support for health information learning and knowledge-sharing, and participation on WHO boards and committees. An integrated, multisectoral, whole-of-government approach to mental health and active ageing was discussed at a meeting between the delegation of Norway and the Regional Director. Zsuzsanna Jakab also offered WHO assistance in implementing the principles of Health 2020, particularly in the areas of inequities and social determinants of health. A policy dialogue on implementing Health 2020 will take place in Helsinki in June for the Nordic and Baltic countries. Zsuzsanna Jakab met with the Bulgarian delegation to discuss collaboration and streamlining ways of working between the Ministry of Health and WHO. Strengthening collaboration and sharing the countrys expertise on TB treatment was the focus of the Slovak delegations meeting with the Regional Director. At a bilateral meeting with the Federal Minister of Health of Germany, Zsuzsanna Jakab thanked Germany for its support to other countries - notably Greece - on reforming health systems, as well as on resource allocation and financial dialogue. Discussions with the delegation of France covered the challenge of addressing pockets of health inequity that have been exacerbated by the economic crisis. The French Government has set up an intersectoral committee to address health. The delegation also expressed its support for promoting the principles of universal health coverage, as this not only acts as a financial protection mechanism but also facilitates access to health care.  
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Die WHO wurde 1948 mit dem Ziel gegründet, für alle Völker das höchstmögliche Gesundheitsniveau zu erreichen. Mit ihren 194 Mitgliedstaaten ist die WHO federführend in globalen Gesundheitsfragen und in der Gestaltung der Forschungsagenda für Gesundheit, im Aufstellen von Normen und Standards und in der Formulierung evidenzbasierter Grundsatzoptionen. Die WHO bietet ihren Mitgliedstaaten fachliche Unterstützung, sie überwacht und bewertet gesundheitliche Entwicklungen, sie unterstützt medizinische Forschung und leistet Soforthilfe bei Katastrophen. Die WHO setzt sich weltweit für bessere Ernährung und für eine Verbesserung der Wohn- und Arbeitsbedingungen sowie der sanitären Verhältnisse ein. Ihr Hauptbüro ist in der Schweiz in Genf angesiedelt. Sechs Regionalbüros sind über die ganze Welt verteilt. Die WHO arbeitet in einem zunehmend komplexen und sich rapide verändernden Umfeld. Gesundheitspolitik ist heute weniger deutlich von anderen Bereichen zu trennen und sie erreicht inzwischen auch die Sektoren, die Auswirkungen auf gesundheitliche Chancen und Ergebnisse haben können. Die Agenda der WHO angesichts solcher Herausforderungen enthält sechs Punkte: zwei gesundheitliche Ziele: Förderung der Entwicklung und Förderung der Gesundheitssicherheit; zwei strategische Bedürfnisse: Stärkung der Gesundheitssysteme und Nutzbarmachung von Forschungsergebnissen, -daten und -erkenntnissen; zwei operative Ansätze: Ausweitung der Partnerschaften und Verbesserung der Leistung.