



**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Africa**

AFR/RC63/Conf.Doc/2
2 September 2013

REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Sixty-third session

Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, 2–6 September, 2013

**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SIXTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE WHO
REGIONAL COMMITTEE AND MINISTER OF HEALTH OF THE REPUBLIC OF
ANGOLA**

- Excellencies,
- Distinguished guests,
- Ladies and gentlemen,
- Distinguished delegates,

It is a great honour and an immense pleasure for me to welcome the guests, honourable ministers, heads of delegation and the delegates to the Sixty-third session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa.

The annual meeting of our Regional Committee gives us an opportunity for strengthening the positioning of health at the centre of the development agenda of the African Region and continuing discussion of the increasingly complex challenges in order to ensure the well-being of our populations.

Therefore, Member States have once again gathered in this beautiful city of Brazzaville where the Regional Office of WHO, our Organization, is located.

No doubt, through the report of the Regional Director and through your interventions, we will learn much about the progress made in implementing the resolutions that we approved during the Sixty-second session in Luanda and even at previous sessions.

I am also convinced that the topics and resolutions that we are about to discuss at this session will be of great importance to our Region in regard to both disease prevention and control, and health systems strengthening.

Acknowledging the essential role that health plays in human development and WHO's heavy responsibility in global health leadership, I invite all Member States of the Region to continue to support the WHO-led process of reform and pursue efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and gradually universal access to preventive and curative health services.

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Having come to the end of my term as Chairman of the Regional Committee for Africa, I would like, firstly, to thank WHO and Member States of the Region for giving me the opportunity to chair the deliberations of the Regional Committee over this period.

I hope I have met your expectations in carrying out the mandate given to me. I hope also that I have contributed to strengthening dialogue and friendship among Member States of the Region for the benefit of the health of our people in line with resolutions of the World Health Assembly pertaining to the African Region.

I can affirm without any hesitation that the Regional Committee has been a very rich and gratifying experience particularly during the deliberations of the last Regional Committee and at the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly.

The process of preparation, brainstorming and consultation involved in holding the Sixty-second session of the Regional Committee in Luanda, coupled with the preparation of Africa's contributions and position on topics and resolutions discussed and approved at the Sixty-sixth World Health Assembly, represent a participatory model that, in my view, enhanced ownership and dynamism of Member States in resolving the health problems affecting our Region.

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Over the past ten months, various regional, interregional and global meetings have contributed to accelerating progress in health development and strengthening unity of purpose of countries of our Region and other countries of the world.

Permit me to mention in particular four events in which I had the pleasure and honour of participating and that we will surely have the opportunity to address indepth during this session, namely:

- the consultation meeting in Gaborone, Botswana, which discussed the Millennium Development Goals post-2015 including universal access to health care in an equitable and integrated manner;
- the April 2013 Global Vaccine Summit, Abu Dhabi, during which we, once again, found out the potential health gains for the African Region of expanding access to a package of more than 10 available vaccines, through optimizing the Global Vaccine Action Plan;
- the recent Abuja+12 meeting organized by the African Union during which we had the opportunity not only to assess the progress made since the first summit on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, but also to renew our commitment to programmes through national ownership, and strengthen mechanisms for accountability, and technical and financial sustainability likely to help us achieve the Millennium Development Goals;
- more recently, we noted with appreciation that almost all African countries participated in the Sino-African Forum on health development, which has become a new forum for dialogue and cooperation with China and a highly important mechanism for our Region's health development and for strengthening South-South cooperation.

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Currently there are concerns about disaster risk management, the decision to establish the African Public Health Emergency Fund and the Roadmap for Strengthening Human Resources for Health.

In this context, I would like to echo the following words of the WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan "*We need to keep doing the right thing, on the right track. The world's people depend on this Organization for so much.*"

May I end my statement by expressing my gratitude to the WHO Regional Director, Dr Luis Gomes Sambo, and his team for the excellent support provided to me during my stewardship as Chairman of the Regional Committee.

I would like to use this opportunity to wish every success to our deliberations and to the work of the incoming Chairman of the Regional Committee.

I thank you very much.