



## **WHA 69**

### **ITALY**

Mme Director General, authorities, colleagues and friends,

Italy fully aligns with the Statement made by the European Union.

Italy has been working for the past year in very close collaboration with WHO and other UN agencies to fulfil the promise we made in May 2015 at the last WHA, envisaging an authoritative, transparent, reliable and resilient WHO.

We have led the WHO/EURO Standing Committee of the Regional Committee subgroup's work on migrants' health and provided ground for the best, most participatory and inclusive framework and action plan in favor of this fragile and vulnerable population group of over one million since then.

The technical briefing jointly organized with WHO on the 27th, at the end of the Assembly, will detail the strategies, challenges and achievements so far. It will also address health needs in a broader political context.

Nothing could have been done without the support and advice of the EURO regional office, whose contribution we gratefully acknowledge.

We are generating a model rights-based approach that we feel stands as the benchmark for all Member States, that have adopted it at the last Standing Committee's meeting on Saturday and Sunday last week here in Geneva..

The recent migrants' compact proposed by Italy to the EU as well as to the African leaders who met in Rome ten days ago will allow for a global, systemic and comprehensive strategy to manage what the world can no longer afford to ignore. It will ensure continuity of support from the countries of provenience, to those of transit and first arrival, as well as to countries of final destination.

The second emerging line of interest for Italy is the health impact of climate changes that WHO has very wisely anticipated and that we intend to bring very high in the political agenda of G7/2017. It is our hope that leaders will discuss and support what the world has started to investigate under the recognized WHO's leadership, with the aim at mitigating potentially devastating effects, such as new and emerging communicable diseases carried by vectors and by the changing habits of insects, rodents, besides human and animals.

As you probably know, Italy has had a model one health approach for more than forty years and is capitalizing on major achievements to reorient its health system according to new challenges and priorities.

Fragile and vulnerable people, especially our children and the elderly will primarily suffer from climate changes, as will be all those with chronic conditions and mostly with multimorbidity profiles that will be exacerbated by those changes, such as heat and cold waves.

Such conditions will also have a severe and to some extent unpredictable impact on the environment by and large, where endocrine disruptors and pollutants are already interacting negatively with the fetal programming process, as recent research evidence in the epigenetic area says highlights how childhood cancers, infantile obesity, diabetes and dysmetabolic diseases, as well as autism are all linked to this ill known and semi-unexplored situation.

Given the serious challenges of new and emerging communicable diseases, we acknowledge WHO's leading role in vaccinations and the global fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Accordingly, we have activated our systems to implement WHO's recommendations and guidelines fully, as Italy is among those countries where coverage is decreasing and antivaccination movements are apparently rampant.

We also endorse WHO's emergency programme reform and are willing to collaborate on its required good and participatory governance. We believe WHO has an operational role to play and we were among the founders of the emergency and humanitarian action division at the Headquarters in the late eighties and the nineties (when an Italian was one of the first Directors), as well as of the Regional emergency office that we supported WHO to establish in Addis Ababa, at the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Both were unfortunately

either downsized or closed, but we are sure WHO is now back on the issue and very strongly committed. We support the view that WHO should involve all its levels in setting a comprehensive technical and operational capacity to respond to emergencies, keeping country and regional offices at the core of its strategic action. This means, for instance, that Regional offices – and not only – will work in collaboration with Member States' centres of excellence, as done by EURO with the ECDC during the past Ebola outbreak. The keywords in this case are networking and complementarity, as envisaged in the possible mobilization of the incoming EU health workforce for emergencies that Italy is currently contributing to set up.

Let me conclude reaffirming Italy's strong support in terms of evidence based policy formulation, strategies implementation, action and accountability for a reformed and functional WHO.

Our added value is the coherence and alignment that we are promoting throughout the initiatives and the organizations we participate in: the Global health security Agenda and Initiative, the G7, the World Bank and the UN family by and large. We do this at the headquarters and political level, as well as at our field offices that have been fully aligned.

We believe this will contribute to a rapid, comprehensive and relevant reform, strengthening WHO as the leader in global public health.

This is what we need and what we want.

Thank you.