

**Speech in representation of the Americas at the WHA 70 delivered
by Minister of Health of Brazil, Ricardo Barros.
May 22, 2017**

Madame Director General, Honorable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I have the honor to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Region of the Americas.
2. I wish first of all to thank Director General Margaret Chan for her effective and constructive leadership over the past ten years.
3. As Dr. Chan's term draws to a close, the incoming Director General will be challenged to build upon solid foundations laid by an accomplished administration.
4. In continuation of what Dr. Chan has started, the region of the Americas calls upon the new DG, whomever he or she may be, to work towards transparent, balanced and effective governance at all levels, to provide political and technical guidance and efficient resource allocation.
5. He or she should aim for a balanced and comprehensive implementation of all mandates agreed by Member States. Implementing the Framework of Engagement with Non State Actors will help build partnerships better aligned with WHO'S constitutional mission and free from conflicts of interest.
6. WHO has an important role to play in support of the sustainable health agenda for the Americas, currently being developed. It should foster institutional collaboration, exchanges of best

practices and lessons learned among the WHO regions and Geneva headquarters

7. Striving for balanced geographical representation and gender equality at all levels is a priority. As are program design and resource allocation to suit the specific characteristics, needs and interests of the different regions;
8. WHO should be capable of responding swiftly to health emergencies of pandemic potential, anticipating and quickly reacting to outbreaks. The challenges of Zika, Chikungunya, Dengue and yellow fever are only too fresh in the minds of our peoples, health authorities and workforce. We cannot afford to underestimate the harm these events may cause, particularly to people and countries most in need.
9. WHO should also be in a position to act on NCDs, nutrition and obesity, access to medicines and the social determinants of health, which are closely related to and an integral part of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.
10. We are happy to bring to the attention of this Assembly that the Americas last year became the first WHO region to eliminate measles – the fifth vaccine-preventable disease eradicated from the region with the support of PAHO/WHO.
11. We commit to working closely with the next Director General in order to improve WHO's capacity to respond to the health challenges of the XXI Century, leaving no one behind.