
World Health Organization
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Item 6 – Oral Health

Thank you chair.

I wish to thank the secretariat for the preparatory report before us, which provides a comprehensive-outline of the work of the WHO Global Oral Health Program.

The Political Declaration of the first High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Universal Health Coverage from 2019 clearly shows our strong and shared commitment to address oral health as part of Universal Health Coverage.

In order to assure efficiency and cost-effectiveness, two elements should be taken into account:

- The process of integrating oral health into Universal Health Coverage should build on the existing foundations of NCDs programs, as they share risk factors, including tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, a high intake of free-sugars and poor hygiene.
- In addition, it is imperative to focus on proper health education from a young age and prevention.

During the current Covid-19 crisis, oral health is often neglected due to fear of spreading the virus, among other reasons. As we transition into a “new normal”, it is important to make sure that oral health interventions are not interrupted, and are provided in a safe manner. We thus commend the WHO for publishing the guide on “Considerations for the provision of essential oral health services in the context of COVID-19” last August, and encourage WHO to update it, as new evidence become available.

Chair,

We have two questions for the secretariat:

We kindly ask to receive further information on the global oral health report to be launched later this year. In particular, we are interested in learning more on its scope and planned outcomes, and whether Member States would have the opportunity to be involved in the process.

We also wish to learn more on the joint WHO-ITU BeHe@lthy, BeMobile initiative, and in particular on its activities and outputs thus far, as well as planned activities and timeline for 2021.

As co-sponsors, we support the draft resolution on Oral Health proposed under this agenda item, and commend Sri Lanka for their leadership on this issue.

I thank you for your attention.