



World Health  
Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR  
Europe

REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE  
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Çeşme Izmir, Turkey, 16–19 September 2013



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## Report of the Launch of WHO's Financing Dialogue





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## **Report of the Launch of WHO's Financing Dialogue**

This document contains the report of the first Financing Dialogue meeting, held on 24 June 2013 in Geneva. It is intended to provide background information to support discussions at the Regional Committee for Europe's sixty-third session, and to promote full understanding of the Financing Dialogue and the financing of the Organization.



## Report of the Launch of WHO's Financing Dialogue 24 June 2013

1. In response to World Health Assembly Decision WHA66(8), the Director-General on 24 June convened the Launch of WHO's Financing Dialogue. Two hundred and fifty-six participants from 87 Member States, six other United Nations agencies and 14 non-State partner organizations, participated in the meeting in person or via webcast<sup>1</sup>.
2. The meeting was chaired by Dr Dirk Cuypers, Chairman of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board. The meeting started with general statements by participants, followed by dedicated sessions on programme, budget and financing aspects and next steps. Ms Maria Luisa Escorel de Moraes of Brazil, Mr Saud Faisal Alsaati of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Dr Anders Nordstrom of Sweden moderated the sessions. Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab, Director, WHO Regional Office for Europe and Dr Mohammed Jama, Assistant Director-General, General Management introduced the topics on behalf of the Secretariat<sup>2</sup>.
3. The Financing Dialogue seeks to facilitate a dialogue both *with* and *among* Member States and other funders and is underpinned by the following key principles:
  - 3.1. **Alignment:** Member States and other funders to commit to allocating funding in a way that is fully aligned with the approved Programme Budget.
  - 3.2. **Predictability & Flexibility:** Member States and other funders to commit to striving for increased predictability and flexibility of their funding.
  - 3.3. **Transparency:** Member States and other funders to commit to making public their funding allocations (firm pledges as well as provisional figures), to allow for a shared understanding of available income against budget category, programme and major office.
4. The participants re-emphasized the unique role of WHO in advancing the global health agenda and the need for WHO to have the necessary capacity, skills, competencies and the financial resources to pursue its work plan as articulated in the Programme Budget 2014-2015.
5. The decision to embark upon the Financing Dialogue was strongly supported by meeting participants, with several noting that it will facilitate their future funding decisions. There was a broad acknowledgement that it will be a learning process and there were invitations by Member States and other funders to continue the dialogue and exchange of views. Participants were invited to provide feedback on the meeting via an on-line survey and this feedback will help to inform both the work that will take place over the next six months and the design of follow-up meeting to be held in November.

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<sup>1</sup> List of Participants attached

<sup>2</sup> Meeting Agenda attached

6. The meeting resulted in specific commitments on the following:
  - 6.1. **Alignment:** The commitment to respect the priorities set by the World Health Assembly was strongly re-affirmed, with participants who expect to continue to provide funds that are earmarked for a particular location, programme or category, committing that this earmarking would be aligned to the priorities agreed by Member States and presented in the Programme Budget. WHO shall not take on the implementation of projects which are not in line with the priorities in the Programme Budget.
  - 6.2. **Predictability:** The value in Member States and other funders increasing the predictability of their funding, for, by example, making public in advance their provisional commitments and moving toward multi-year commitments was noted, though several participants highlighted internal constraints that would prevent them from doing so. A number of Member States provided general indications of the amount and shape of their funding for 2014-15 and committed to confirming their contributions by November. Others committed to be ready to share at least indicative information by November.
  - 6.3. **Flexibility:** Several Member States and other funders expressed their commitment to increase the flexibility of their funding, for example by moving the level of earmarking from project to programme level, or from programme level to category level. Some participants encouraged the Secretariat to explore incentives for contributors to provide more flexible funding.
  - 6.4. **Broadening the contributors base:** Ten contributors provide more than 60% of WHO's funding, with the top 20 donors providing more than 80% of WHO's funding. The vulnerability inherent in this situation was highlighted and the importance of broadening the donor base, in the first instance among Member States, was underscored. One Member State announced that it had provided a supplement to assessed contributions on a voluntary basis.
  - 6.5. **Transparency:** Meeting participants endorsed a prototype of a web portal WHO is developing in response to Member State calls for increased transparency and accountability around WHO financing. The portal will provide access to real-time results and programmatic, budgetary and financial and monitoring information. It could also allow for tracking of pipeline funding. It was widely acknowledged that the web portal will be a key tool in supporting the Finance Dialogue principles and it was noted that the portal would also help facilitate policy coherence within Member States.
  - 6.6. **Continuing the discussion:** The discussion shall continue at the Regional Committees, to allow full understanding of this work so that member states can fulfill their responsibility also for the financing of the organization. It was also suggested that a specific discussion, complementary to bilateral discussions, should take place with partners providing core voluntary contributions.

7. In her closing remarks the Director-General paid tribute to Member States for the constructive dialogue, and their commitment to the principles of alignment, transparency, predictability, flexibility and broadening of the contributors base. Based on feedback received during the course of the meeting, she highlighted several actions the Secretariat will be taking that will feed into planning for the follow-up Financing Dialogue meeting in November.
  - 7.1. The web portal will be further developed based on feedback received, with the goal of having it operational in October. There was recognition that this would remain a work in progress for some time, including relating to the level of access to/openness of the web portal.
  - 7.2. Operational planning, a bottom-up process reflecting country-level priorities, is underway. It will establish costed outputs to complement the higher level information provided at the meeting.
  - 7.3. WHO will conduct bilateral follow-up with Member States and other funders as requested, to assist in funding decisions and will work with Member States and other funders to share this information ahead of the November meeting.
  - 7.4. The report of this meeting will be provided to Regional Committees and a synthesis of the Regional Committee discussions will be made available ahead of the November meeting.
  - 7.5. WHO will respond to Member State calls for a more coordinated approach to resource mobilization and income planning across all levels of the Organization as well as a plan for the work beyond November.
  - 7.6. WHO will work to broaden the contributors base, starting with Member States, and will continue to explore additional opportunities to increase income, including through “voluntary” assessed contributions, as has been suggested by some Member States.
  - 7.7. At the November meeting of the financing dialogue, the Director-General will give an indication of the strategic use of assessed contributions to ensure core programs are operational.