



**Pan American  
Health  
Organization**



**World Health  
Organization**

Americas Region

**62nd Directing Council  
77th Session of the Regional Committee of WHO  
for the Americas**  
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**CLOSING REMARKS BY DR. JARBAS BARBOSA DA SILVA JR.  
DIRECTOR OF THE PAN AMERICAN SANITARY BUREAU  
AND REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION FOR THE AMERICAS**

**2 October 2025**

Sen. Dr. the Honorable Jerome Walcott, Minister of Health and Wellness of Barbados,  
President of the 62nd Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization;

Honorable Vice-presidents of the 62nd Directing Council, Argentina and Peru;

Honorable Dr. Frank Antony, Minister of Health of Guyana, President of the 176th Session of  
the Executive Committee;

Honorable Rapporteur, Mr. Alejandro Alvarez, Human Rights Attache to the Permanent  
Mission of Chile to the Organization of American States;

Our Deputy Director, Ms. Mary Lou Valdez, who served as Secretary ex officio of the  
62nd Directing Council;

Honorable ministers and secretaries of health of PAHO Member States;

Distinguished Delegates;

Representatives of non-State actors in official relations with PAHO;

Fellow PAHO and WHO colleagues;

Honored guests;

Esteemed ladies and gentlemen,

A very good afternoon to you all.

As we end this 62nd Directing Council of PAHO, I am genuinely honored to feel the trust and  
commitment that you all have in this Organization. We heard loud and clear your undeniable support  
and strategic guidance, reinforcing our mandate to protect the health of the people of the Region of  
the Americas.

The documents and resolutions discussed this week went through one of the richest  
consultative processes that the Directing Council has ever had.

During these past four days, you have successfully navigated through 35 agenda items;  
reviewed three progress reports, and three final reports; and approved 10 resolutions.

On behalf of the entire Pan American Sanitary Bureau, I wish to extend my sincerest thanks and heartfelt appreciation to you all for your individual and collective contributions to delivering on this week's extensive tasks.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take a moment to briefly recapture the highlights of this week's deliberations.

During this week you discussed and approved vital resolutions related to PAHO's Strategic Plan 2026–2031; PAHO's Budget Policy; the Policy for Expanding Equitable Access to High-cost and High-price Health Technologies; and the Plan of Action on Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Control 2025–2030.

The approval of the Strategic Plan 2026–2031 will guide the strategic direction and desired health impacts and outcomes that the Bureau and Member States commit to collectively achieve by 2031. This Strategic Plan includes an extensive analysis on the current context, the impact of health challenges on health and well-being, the outlook and opportunities for the future, and the Bureau's role in accelerating progress.

The Policy for Expanding Equitable Access to High-cost and High-price Health Technologies aims to ensure access for all to high-cost and high-price health technologies through strategies that promote comprehensive public health approaches. These strategies will take into account the life cycle of health technologies, their contribution to the quality of care, and the increased life expectancy they offer to the population, as well as access barriers, gaps, and opportunities.

The Plan of Action on Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Control 2025–2030 will support Member States in accelerating actions necessary to meet the global NCD targets. Recognizing that a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach—with multisectoral partnerships—is needed to address NCDs, the plan of action outlines three overarching strategic lines of action to be implemented over its time frame (2025–2030).

The Directing Council received three briefing sessions.

The first one, on the Presentation of the Report of the World Bank/PAHO Lancet Regional Commission on Primary Health Care and Resilience in Latin America and the Caribbean. This report emphasizes that resilience must be considered as a cornerstone of primary health care. It offers recommendations to strengthen integrated services, essential public health functions, community empowerment and trust, multisectoral action, and financing, all tied together by the need for sustained commitment and progress toward universal health and PHC-based systems in Latin America and the Caribbean.

We also had a briefing on advances in innovative approaches in the use of the Regional Revolving Funds in regional production, in agreements for rapid response to potential outbreaks and pandemics, and in the introduction of new technologies into the Funds' portfolio. In this session, we heard about what various countries are doing to procure expensive cancer treatments at more competitive prices. They also shared examples of the application of health technologies for the

prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cervical cancer and the path toward regional production and distribution of the PCV-20 vaccine through our Regional Revolving Funds.

The last briefing, on Wednesday, was on “Accelerating Disease Elimination by Reaching Populations Living in Vulnerable Conditions: Best Buys for Action.” The event showcased impressive national experiences that are accelerating the elimination of communicable diseases in Guyana, Paraguay, and Suriname. The briefing also highlighted high-impact, cost-effective interventions, or “best buys,” that strengthen the Region’s capacity to eliminate diseases in populations living in conditions of vulnerability. Finally, sustained political commitment and multisectoral collaboration were encouraged to ensure that no one is left behind in disease elimination efforts. The briefing session also included a ceremony recognizing Suriname for having achieved malaria elimination—the first country in the Amazon Basin to do so. This accomplishment will undoubtedly inspire other countries in the Amazon Basin region to follow suit.

We also recognized Dr. July Esther Caballero Peralta, of Peru, who received the PAHO Award for Health Services Management and Leadership 2025. The award highlights Dr. Caballero’s leadership in expanding and strengthening mental health services in Peru.

Member States carefully reviewed progress reports and final reports on a number of strategies and plans of action that are still being implemented or have now been completed. We all agree that, while we continue to build on our collective successes, much remains to be done to address persistent challenges.

On the sidelines of the 62nd Directing Council, we had a special tribute to the health workers of the Region of the Americas during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was also a tribute to our Director Emeritus, our beloved Dr. Carissa Etienne, who was represented by her family. The tribute is a beautiful sculpture which is now on permanent display in our lobby, and which was created with the participation and support of the PAHO/WHO Credit Union and the PAHO/WHO Staff Association

I wish to convey special thanks and deep appreciation to the President of the 62nd Directing Council, the Sen. Dr. the Honorable Jerome Walcott, Minister of Health and Wellness of Barbados, for the steadfastness and great efficiency with which he has presided over this 62nd Directing Council. Thank you for keeping us on course to complete the week’s agenda, with respect, courtesy, and sensitivity.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the President of the 176th Session of the Executive Committee, His Excellency Dr. Frank Anthony, Minister of Health of Guyana, and to the Vice-President of the 176th Session of the Executive Committee, His Excellency Dr. Francisco Alabí Montoya, Minister of Health of El Salvador, as well as to our rapporteur, Mr. Alejandro Álvarez, Human Rights Attaché of the Permanent Mission of Chile to the Organization of American States, for being with us throughout the week and for his valuable work in this Council.

I also wish to thank our Deputy Director, Ms. Mary Lou Valdez, for her dedication as Secretary of the 62nd Directing Council. I would like to thank all of our staff, including the staff of the Governing Bodies Office, for their tireless efforts and excellent contributions both during this week’s meeting and in the preparations made in the preceding weeks.

I cannot fail to express my appreciation to our interpreters, without whom we would not be able to perform our work so smoothly. When we speak very fast—people from some countries have a reputation for speaking very fast, especially when they want to take full advantage of the time available—the interpreters make an extra effort. Thank you very much for your good work. I would also like to highlight the work of our translators, who have made it possible for all the documents of this meeting to be available in the four official languages of the Organization in time for review by our Member States.

As we conclude today, I would like to respectfully ask that we recommit to the Pan American values of excellence, solidarity, respect, and integrity. Once again, I congratulate you all for your commitment and excellence in this week's deliberations. Over the past few days, you approved resolutions that clearly indicate to the Bureau what the priorities are, what the challenges are, and how we are going to direct our technical cooperation. You can rest assured that, as always in this Organization, the Bureau does not make decisions in isolation, nor does it create agendas or deviate from ethical values, from the values that represent the commitment to pan-Americanism, solidarity, transparency, the quest for efficiency and the best technical cooperation that we can possibly provide to our Member States. We have always worked in this way, and we are going to continue along exactly this same path. This is of the utmost importance because it respects the decisions that you make and our commitment to transform them into concrete action in each of the countries, in each of the Member States of the Organization. Thank you very much, and I wish you an excellent return to your respective homes.

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