



**Pan American
Health
Organization**



**World Health
Organization**
Americas Region

78th Session of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas

Washington, D.C., 1–2 October 2026

AMR/RC78/DIV/1

Original: English/Spanish

WELCOMING 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

1 October 2026

Honorable Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO). Dr. Tedros, it is an honor to have you participate in the opening of the Regional Committee. I think that, for all of us, having you even in virtual presence reminds us of your strong leadership during the most dramatic public health crisis that we had in the last century, the COVID-19 pandemic. I think that your inspiration, your career, and your leadership during these times, and in WHO, is a real inspiration for all of us, and the countries in the Region of the Americas are grateful for this leadership;

We also have with us the Honorable Mr. Derek Walton, Legal Counsel, Office of the Legal Counsel of WHO;

Honorable Dr. May Chomali Garib, Minister of Health of Chile and President of this 78th Session of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas;

Honorable Mr. Michael Joseph, Minister of Health, Wellness, Environment and Civil Service Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, and distinguished Dr. Yelkys Gil, National Director of Public Health of Panama, as Vice-Presidents of this Session;

Distinguished Rapporteur Dr. Cherita Moxey, Senior Officer, Policy and Planning, Ministry of Health and Wellness of the Bahamas;

Distinguished Ministers of Health, Ambassadors, delegations, and colleagues.

It is my honor to welcome you to the 78th Session of the Regional Committee of the World Health Organization for the Americas.

As you know, the 178th Session of PAHO's Executive Committee held from 15 to 18 June 2026 approved the provisional agenda for the 63rd Directing Council of PAHO as well as the draft provisional agenda for this 78th Session of the Regional Committee of WHO for the Americas.

This approach distinguished between agenda items related to PAHO and those related to WHO. As mentioned by the President of the Regional Committee, Minister Chomali, this should not be interpreted as questioning the close relationship between PAHO and WHO. This relationship provides a strong foundation for an effective and constructive collaboration for public health in the Region of the Americas. We are proud to have served as the WHO Regional Office for the Americas for decades

and we are also proud to continue this close collaboration in serving all the countries in the Americas as WHO's Regional Office.

Most Member States' deliberations on the respective agenda items took place during PAHO's Directing Council and, as it was explained, they will be brought as decisions of the Regional Committee. In these Sessions, today and tomorrow, we will focus on matters related to WHO, and on some global topics that you will be discussing here as part of the regional consultation process and that you will be finalizing next year during the World Health Assembly.

Tomorrow morning we will have a briefing on the reform of the global health architecture. In May 2026, the 79th World Health Assembly established a one-year joint process, organized by WHO and led by Member States, with representatives of relevant global health initiatives, UN entities, the World Bank, and regional health organizations, in consultation with civil society and stakeholders, to support the transformation of the global health architecture into a more coherent and inclusive country-led ecosystem that responds more effectively and efficiently to the specific and collective needs of countries and communities. Two countries from our Region, Brazil and Mexico, were appointed as part of the Working Group, and I thank them for their active participation in this process.

Two other very important topics to be discussed are the financing of the WHO Programme Budget 2026–2027 and the preliminary draft of the WHO Proposed Programme Budget 2028–2029. The Proposed Programme Budget 2028–2029 is the last Programme Budget in the implementation of the Fourteenth General Programme of Work 2025–2028 (GPW 14). After the restructuring of 2025, this is a budget of consolidation, focus, and impact: it consolidates the financial and organizational reforms undertaken during the first half of GPW 14; it focuses WHO's work and resources on its core mandate, agreed priorities, and areas of comparative advantage; and it strengthens the Organization's ability to deliver measurable impact in countries and among the people it serves. For the Americas, it represents another opportunity to continue advocating for closer alignment of the budget with national and regional priorities, accompanied by a proportionate and more equitable allocation of funding to the Region.

I hope that the deliberations of the next two days will be fruitful, and I thank you for your participation.

Thank you very much, muchas gracias, muito obrigado, and merci beaucoup.
