



COUNTRY REMARKS

**KHAIRY JAMALUDDIN
MINISTER OF HEALTH MALAYSIA**

**AT
THE 150th WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION'S EXECUTIVE BOARD
MEETING**

24 - 29 JANUARY 2022, GENEVA

- Honourable Chair
- Director-General
- Ladies & Gentlemen

Preparedness & Response to Health Emergencies:

1. Malaysia acknowledges the Secretariat and the Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies for their tireless efforts to find a global solution to address the weaknesses in healthcare systems revealed by this pandemic.
2. Strengthening the implementation and compliance of the International Health Regulations (2005) must be a top priority. Malaysia supports the establishment of the intergovernmental negotiating body to strengthen pandemic preparedness and response. We need to work together to restructure the global health architecture to one that is inclusive, accountable, equitable and transparent to ensure the glaring shortcomings and inequity of the last two years can be avoided in the future.

3. In the third year of the pandemic, extended lockdowns and border controls should no longer be viable options as vaccines, vigilance and community empowerment become more crucial in pandemic management. While the world is tired from the stop-start-stop-start dance we have all been doing, we should also not assume that letting Omicron rip will bring about an endgame and not leave in its wake much death and damage.
4. Malaysia has tried to respond in a calibrated and proportionate manner. We have implemented mitigation strategies to contain the pandemic while slowing down the impending Omicron wave without imposing harsh restrictions nor overwhelming our healthcare system. As we move forward, sometimes with different strategies, a normative consensus on how we all 'live with COVID-19' is necessary.
5. The rise of Omicron has also underlined once again the urgent need to ensure equitable distribution and access to important tools needed to bring an end to this pandemic - vaccines, tests sequencing and therapeutics. Without resolving this great failing of humanity, it is likely that more variants can emerge as the virus spreads through vast segments of the world's population who are still unvaccinated.
6. Malaysia has taken a **whole of society** approach in addressing the challenges of the pandemic. The Government of Malaysia works hand in hand through public-private partnerships and with non-governmental organisations to ensure that everyone living in the country, regardless of their citizenship status, are entitled to a free, safe and effective vaccine.

7. Understanding the importance of real-time data sharing and the use of technology during the pandemic, Malaysia uploads comprehensive datasets daily. We upload individual anonymised line-listed details of every positive case daily. Malaysia's data is shared so other countries can see actual world data on vaccine effectiveness, breakthrough infections and deaths based on vaccine types, when the vaccines were administered, and other critical anonymised personal data like age, and underlying health conditions. Through this, evidence-based information is conveyed to the public to reduce misinformation and also increase vaccination uptake.

Digital Health:

8. We also need to share with and empower one another with best practices in using technology. Many of us have developed artificial intelligence applications for contact tracing, quarantine facilitation, digital proof of vaccinations and testing. We need to showcase the best practices of digital deployment during the pandemic.

Mental Health Advocacy:

9. Malaysia would like to raise "the silent parallel pandemic". This is the deterioration of mental health. Lockdowns, movement restrictions, unemployment, and financial insecurity have led to a spike in the number of people seeking mental health support across the globe. Malaysia launched its National Strategic Plan for Mental Health focusing on inter-sectoral collaboration and crisis preparedness in addressing mental health issues, including suicide and suicidal behaviours, as well as surveillance for early detection of cases that will allow for prompt monitoring and timely intervention.

WHO Sustainable Financing:

10. Malaysia commends the leadership of the DG for fulfilling the mandate of WHO's work globally despite the resource-constrained environment. We recognise the dire importance to ensure sustainable financing, especially to carry out work for the shared vision of health in the Western Pacific region.
11. On WHO's financing mechanism, we extend our appreciation to the Working Group and its members for their extensive work in long-standing consultations and robust discussion with the Member States in finding the best possible ways to improve the organisation's finances. Malaysia urges that with the incremental increase in assessed contributions, the financial benefits should be equitably distributed and shared across all levels of the organisation. Thank you.

24 January 2022

***Delivered at 11.47am in Geneva, 6.50pm Malaysia time**