

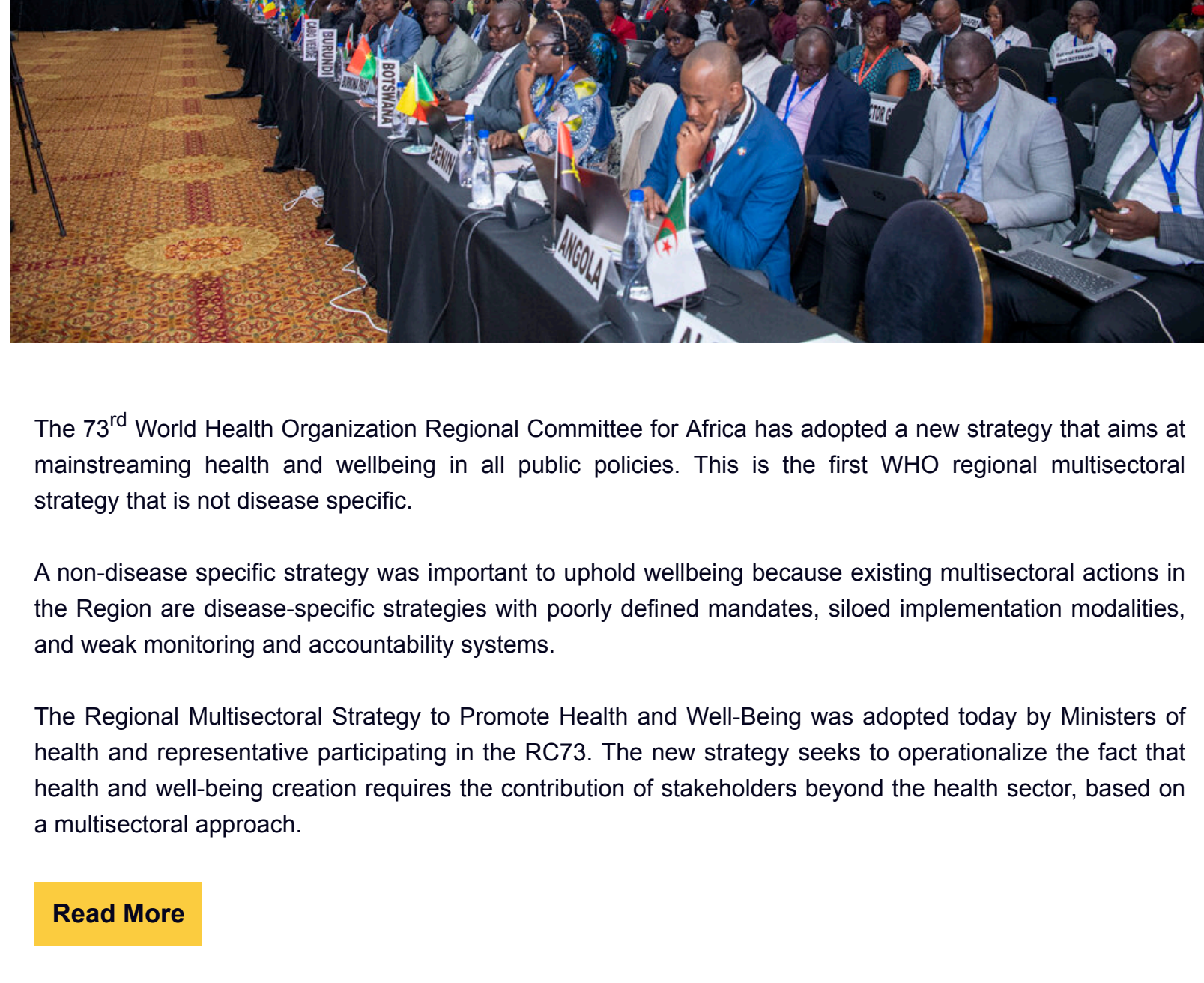


THE 73RD SESSION OF THE
REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

28 AUGUST |
1 SEPTEMBER 2023 |

RC73

African Health ministers adapt new strategy that invites all sectors to promote health and wellbeing



The 73rd World Health Organization Regional Committee for Africa has adopted a new strategy that aims at mainstreaming health and wellbeing in all public policies. This is the first WHO regional multisectoral strategy that is not disease specific.

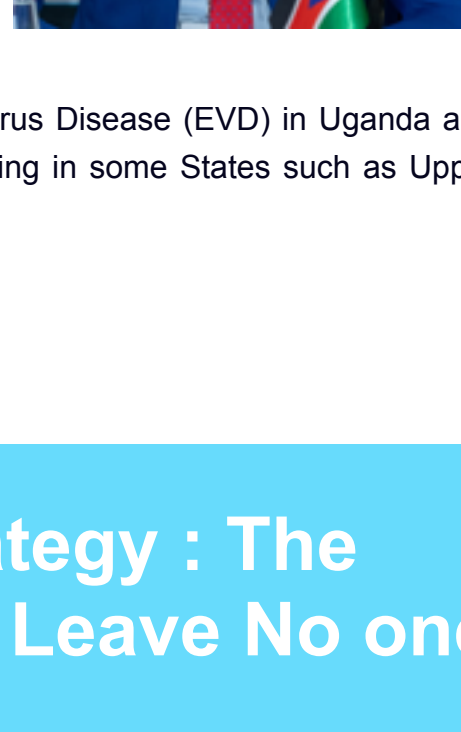
A non-disease specific strategy was important to uphold wellbeing because existing multisectoral actions in the Region are disease-specific strategies with poorly defined mandates, siloed implementation modalities, and weak monitoring and accountability systems.

The Regional Multisectoral Strategy to Promote Health and Well-Being was adopted today by Ministers of health and representative participating in the RC73. The new strategy seeks to operationalize the fact that health and well-being creation requires the contribution of stakeholders beyond the health sector, based on a multisectoral approach.

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Interview - The Hon. Undersecretary, Dr Ader Macar Aciek, Ministry of Health, Republic of South Sudan

Your country has had a very successful response to recent health emergencies.

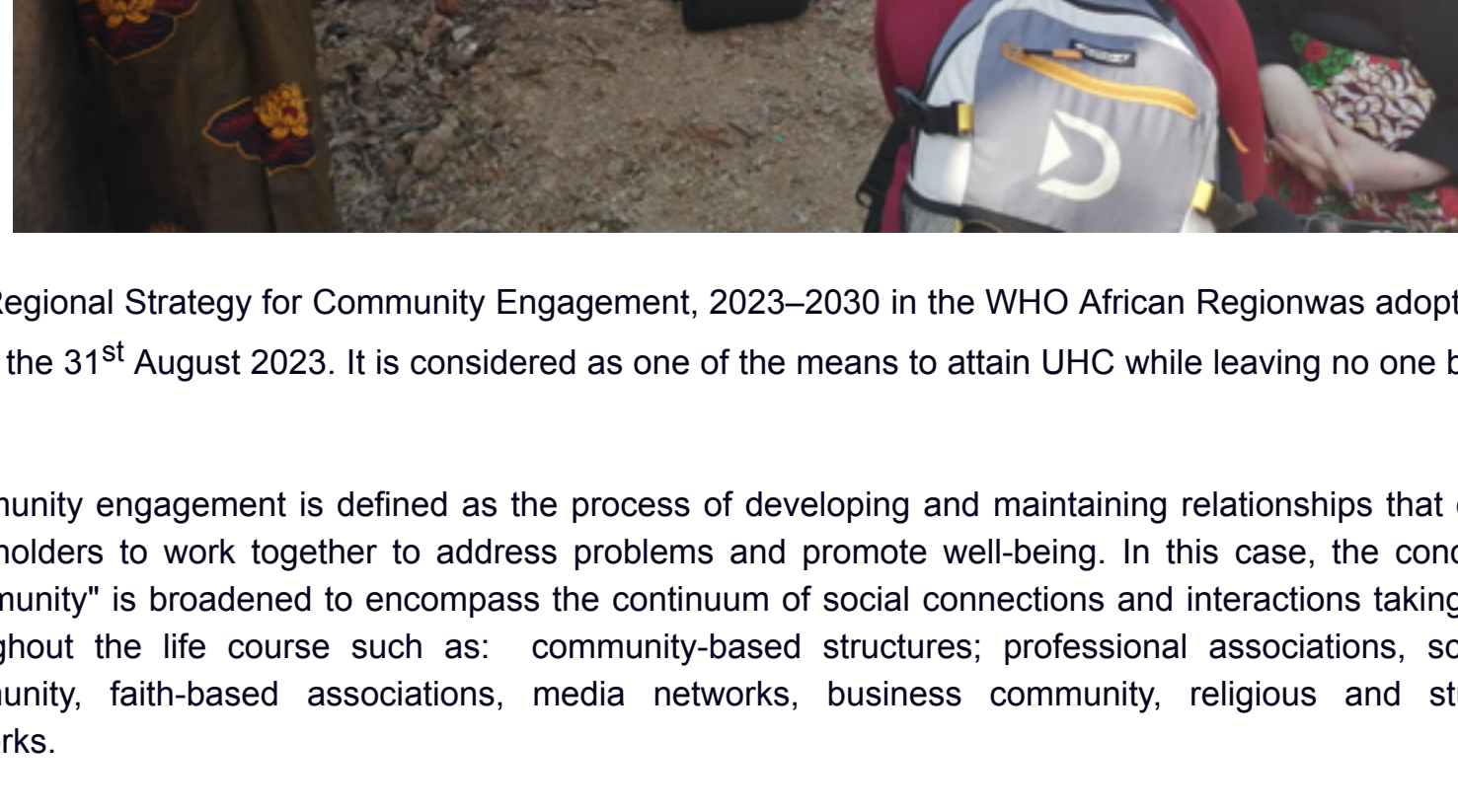


Opening statement

Yes, my country faced number of health emergencies (disease outbreaks and effects of climate change) the recent one being suspected viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF) in Longechuk county, Upper Nile State. In the second quarter of last year 2022, we had multiple health emergencies at one time including Cholera and Hepatitis E (Rubkona County, Unity State), Meningitis (Northern Bahr el Ghazel), and Measles (all ten States) besides COVID-19 pandemic and Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Uganda and threat of its importation to South Sudan. This was complicated by flooding in some States such as Upper Nile, Unity, Jonglei, Northern and Western Bahr el Ghazel etc.

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Community Engagement Strategy : The best way to go towards “ Not Leave No one Behind”



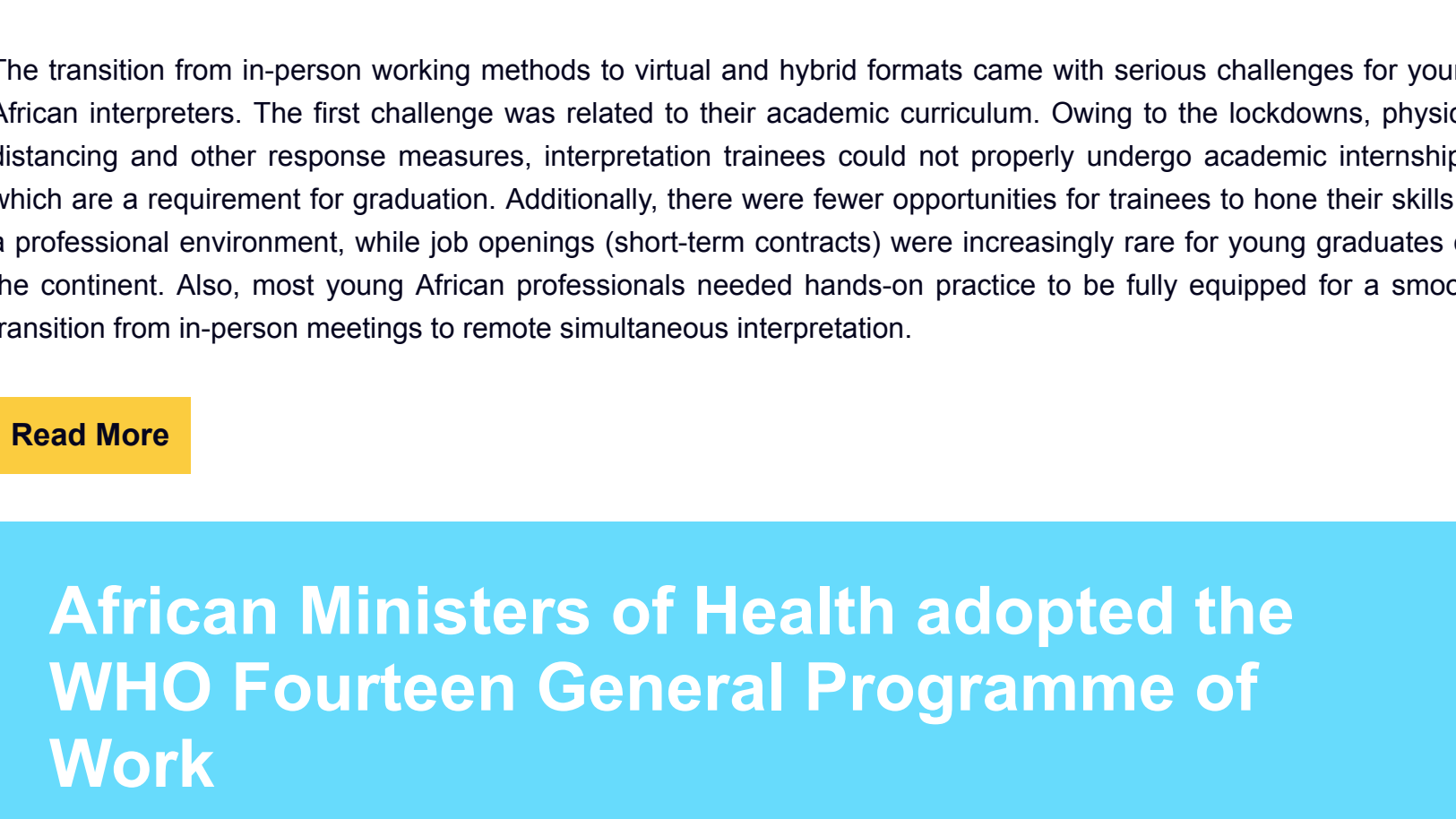
The Regional Strategy for Community Engagement, 2023–2030 in the WHO African Region was adopted RC 73 on the 31st August 2023. It is considered as one of the means to attain UHC while leaving no one behind.

Community engagement is defined as the process of developing and maintaining relationships that enable stakeholders to work together to address problems and promote well-being. In this case, the concept of "community" is broadened to encompass the continuum of social connections and interactions taking place throughout the life course such as: community-based structures; professional associations, scientific community, faith-based associations, media networks, business community, religious and students networks.

The strategy, presented by Dr. Adelheid Werimo Onyango, Director of the Healthier Population Cluster at WHO/AFRO, will contribute to addressing the challenges affecting health and well-being in the African Region. According to Dr Onyango, **“When you look at supply side less than 50% of the population has access to quality essential health services. On the demand side there are sub – optimal demand for the services”**.

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Online conference interpreting internship programme for young African interpreters in the WHO Africa



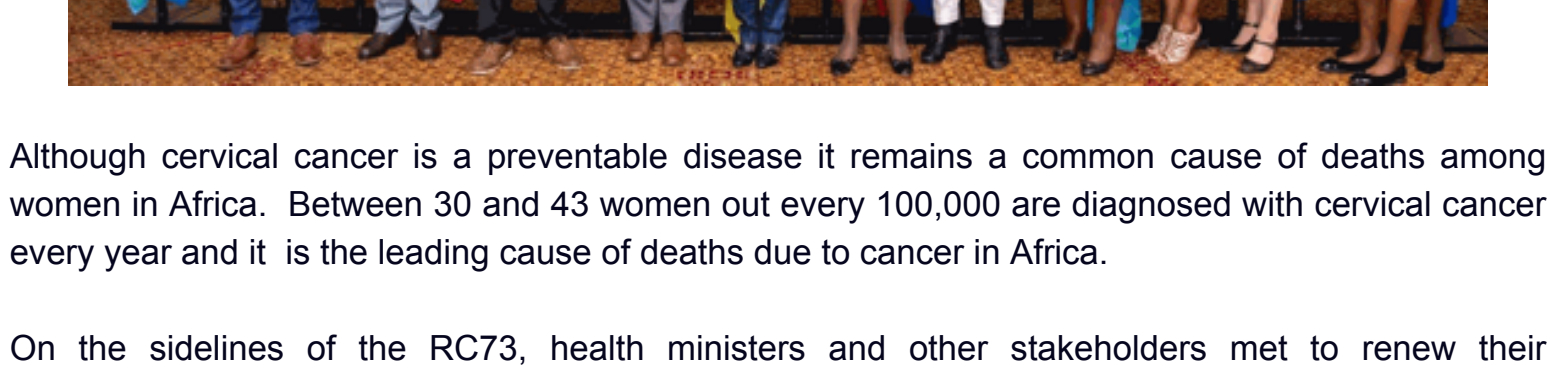
The idea of this internship programme emerged amid turmoil and uncertainty as the entire world was grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond the disease's devastating effects on the lives, health and livelihoods of millions of people, it also had a major impact on all trades and professions, including conference interpretation.

The rationale for an online conference interpreting internship programme

The transition from in-person working methods to virtual and hybrid formats came with serious challenges for young African interpreters. The first challenge was related to their academic curriculum. Owing to the lockdowns, physical distancing and other response measures, interpretation trainees could not properly undergo academic internships, which are a requirement for graduation. Additionally, there were fewer opportunities for trainees to hone their skills in a professional environment, while job openings (short-term contracts) were increasingly rare for young graduates on the continent. Also, most young African professionals needed hands-on practice to be fully equipped for a smooth transition from in-person meetings to remote simultaneous interpretation.

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African Ministers of Health adopted the WHO Fourteen General Programme of Work



The Delegates to the Regional Committee (RC73) adopted on August 31 in Gaborone the WHO Fourteen General Program of Work (GPW14) 20025-2025 to promote, provide, and protect health and well-being for all people in the African Region.

During his open remarks, Dr. Joseph Kabore, the *Director of Program Management at the WHO Regional Office for Africa*, said that GPW14 is a crucial program that will support the region to build durable resilience into national health systems, protect its people and save lives, considering that health, well-being, and health security are increasingly central to national long-term stability and growth agendas.

Since adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, the world has changed fundamentally, with profound implications for health, well-being, and health systems everywhere. Countries face a worsening environment for achieving better health outcomes due to and including climate change, ageing populations, food insecurity, growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), new infectious and natural hazards, growing inequities and migration.

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A call to re-energise the fight against Cervical Cancer in Africa made at RC73



Although cervical cancer is a preventable disease it remains a common cause of deaths among women in Africa. Between 30 and 43 women out every 100,000 are diagnosed with cervical cancer every year and it is the leading cause of deaths due to cancer in Africa.

On the sidelines of the RC73, health ministers and other stakeholders met to renew their commitment to ending cervical cancer as public health problem by adopting new tools, revitalized policy frameworks, and renewed political will.

The event was co hosted by Grace Machel Foundation, Gavi, Unitaid, Global Financing Facility, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Government of Burkina Faso, Comoros, Liberia, and Malawi.

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At the conclusion of the 73rd Regional Committee Meeting, Member States endorsed the recommendations



The following are some key recommendations that have been endorsed to address important health issues in Africa:

Research for health: to build efficient National Health Research Systems that generate valuable scientific insights for healthcare provision, delegates endorsed the recommendations to provide sufficient domestic funding for health research, prioritize research interventions, establish and sustain knowledge translation platforms, and strengthen research capacity using lessons learned from COVID-19.

Scaling up health innovations: to scale up health innovations in the African Region, delegates attending the RC73 agreed to develop sustainability plans for innovations, allocate domestic resources to develop analytical tools, provide incentive mechanisms to spur creativity and ensure synergies across different health system tiers to facilitate the adoption of locally developed innovative solutions.

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RC 73 Closes in Gaborone, Botswana

Following 4 days of intense discussions at both the main sessions and side-events of RC 73, Dr Edwin Dikoloti, Minister of Health Botswana in his closing remarks announced that a copy of the RC 73 report will be shared electronically by the Secretariat with Member States who will be expected to submit written comments electronically within 2 weeks of receipt. After consolidating the inputs from member states, Secretariat will finalize and publish on the WHO/AFRO website. He thanked all delegates for their participation and according to him the opportunity to preside over the Regional Committee proceedings.

In moving a vote of thanks, the Honorable Minister of Health of Cape Verde Madam Goncalves thanked Botswana for the warm welcome as the generosity of the people of Botswana in hosting such a great meeting. She singled out His Excellency President Masiisi for special recognition for his incredible support to the success of the meeting and dedication to improving the health of the people of Botswana. She thanked Minister Dikoloti for his tireless efforts and exemplary leadership throughout the meeting. "Pula" she said in conclusion.

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