

STATEMENT

Progress report on the Framework for sustaining resilient health systems to achieve Universal Health Coverage and promote health security 2023–2030 in the WHO African Region

EVENT

WHO Regional Committee for Africa, seventy-sixth session

AGENDA ITEM

18.8

DATE

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Delivered by Brenda Chitindi, Zambia Heart and Stroke Foundation, on behalf of World Obesity.

World Obesity welcomes this report. However, we urge member states to ensure obesity services are also integrated into Universal Health Coverage (UHC) going forward. As stated in the WHO recommendations, obesity prevention and management should be included in primary health coverage (PHC).

Obesity is rising fast in Africa. Adult obesity already exceeds thirty percent in several countries. Obesity is a disease requiring a multisectoral response including in health systems. Prevention policies alone will not be enough to stem the tide. Given that obesity is also a major driver of other NCDs including diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, addressing obesity in PHC will deliver a 'double dividend': generating health and economic gains while targeting the root cause of multiple diseases.

Countries in the region are already recognising this and starting to integrate obesity into PHC. To ensure these programmes are truly effective, it is vital to involve people with lived experience of obesity in their design and implementation. This collaborative approach helps create non-stigmatising, patient-centred services that people can trust. World Obesity calls on WHO AFRO members to ensure that obesity prevention and management services are also considered essential services and integrated into the "Framework for sustaining resilient health systems to achieve UHC and promote health security" before the obesity epidemic takes hold in the African region as well.