



Organización  
Panamericana  
de la Salud



Organización  
Mundial de la Salud

OFICINA REGIONAL PARA LAS Américas

## **56th DIRECTING COUNCIL**

***70th SESSION OF THE WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE AMERICAS***

*Washington, D.C., USA, 23-27 September 2018*

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**OPENING REMARKS BY THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT  
OF THE PAHO DIRECTING COUNCIL, DR. OCTAVIO SANCHEZ MIDENCE  
SECRETARY OF HEALTH OF HONDURAS**

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**23 September 2018  
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**56th Directing Council of PAHO  
70th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Americas**

Good Morning

Members of the Head Table

Ministers and Secretaries of State

Delegations of the Member States and Representatives of invited Agencies

In this opening session, I am pleased to offer cordial greetings on behalf of the government and people of Honduras, and to share with you our satisfaction in having made another year of major progress in the health of the people of the Region of the Americas, by focusing on a joint effort to achieve universal access to health and universal health coverage, from a perspective of the human right to health.

Like every year, we come together in this great Directing Council to establish a plan of work that will have a significant impact on health protection, especially for those who are most vulnerable and who most require the attention of our health systems.

While great progress in health has been made worldwide and especially in the Region of the Americas, there are still major challenges to the sustainability of what has been accomplished, including our preparedness to respond to emergencies and disasters, climate change, and emerging and reemerging diseases. Effective and timely response requires joint efforts at both the national and international levels and, especially, the ongoing support of the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization, as well as all our international friends and cooperating agencies who are partners in this daily struggle to achieve our objectives in health.

Both worldwide and in the Americas, we now have a common roadmap that guides and directs us in our work: the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which establishes common objectives in 17 key areas, not only for health, but for the life of our people and the care of Planet Earth, which is home to us all.

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Before concluding my address, I want to mention that Honduras, through its Ministry of Health, has undertaken an innovative process to transform our National Health System. The basic objective is to achieve Universal Access to Health and Universal Health Coverage through a system for social protection in health. We thank PAHO and other institutions for your support in this reform process.

It has been a great honor for my country to chair the 55th Directing Council, and I thank you for your confidence in us. At the same time, I call on the delegates of the Member States of the Region of the Americas to actively participate, consider, and contribute to each topic proposed at this meeting, because this is how a wealth of knowledge is created, each country's positions and practices are strengthened, and progress is made toward focusing our resources on meeting the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Sustainable Health Agenda for the Americas, and the Strategic Plan of the Pan American Health Organization.

Thank you very much and may this be a very successful day.

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