



**European Union
Statement**

WHO

152nd Executive Board

(30 January - 7 February 2023)

Item 2 - Report by the Director-General

Geneva, 30 January 2023

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152nd Session of the Executive Board

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EU Statement

Mr. Director General,

Mrs. President,

Excellencies,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States.

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina* align themselves with this statement.

The EU wishes to thank the Director-General for his extensive report, and we take note of the continued global health challenges over the last year. Unfortunately, we have reason to believe that many of these challenges will remain in 2023.

Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which grossly violates international law and the UN Charter and undermines international security and stability, continues. We condemn Russia's military aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms and express full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. We also stress that Russia always must respect its responsibilities under international humanitarian law. To this date nearly 750 attacks on health care have been verified in Ukraine. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported a total of 17 023 civilian casualties in Ukraine since the war began on 24 February 2022. Furthermore, the military aggression has triggered energy and food supply challenges, exacerbating existing food systems vulnerabilities, already weakened under the effect of climate change and the COVID 19 pandemic. The huge impact

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

of conflict on the health and wellbeing of people and societies is the case in all on-going conflicts across the world.

Dr Tedros – we commend WHO for its effective response to new emergencies over the past year, such as Ebola in Uganda and M-pox, and we support the Director-General and WHO's inclusion of human rights and nondiscrimination perspectives in the responses.

The Covid-19 pandemic is not over. We need to monitor and assess the situation continuously and integrate the lessons learned from the pandemic. We reiterate the need for continued leadership at all levels, multilateral cooperation, and as well as for a modern and effective international system with actors with distinct and well-defined complementary roles and responsibilities. WHO has a central role to play to deliver on the SDG's, through its mandate to provide leadership, knowledge, advice and technical support to all countries, as well as through its convening role. Fostering inclusive collaboration of international actors and counteracting fragmentation, also beyond the emergencies agenda, is crucial for an effective international system, leaving no region of the world behind.

The EU remains committed to reforming the international system for pandemic preparedness and response and to strengthen the legal and normative framework for pandemic and emergencies response via the revised International Health Regulations and an international pandemic agreement. We stand ready to engage in constructive dialogue and negotiations in the Working Group for IHR and INB, and we look to the respective Bureaus to facilitate and lead these processes and work together with Member States for successful outcomes.

We look forward to work together to contribute to successful outcomes at this year's UNGA high level meetings in New York on Universal Health Coverage, TB and Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response.

Finally, the EU wishes to acknowledge the inclusive process to develop a draft Program Budget with a stronger country focus, in line with the objective of the GPW13 to strengthen country capacity and to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the triple billion targets and health-related Sustainable Development Goals. We are ready to consider and support the five priorities of the GPW, and at the same time wish to emphasise the importance of delivering the objectives of the GPW in its entirety. We wish to stress that implementing the

reforms on WHO financing and enabling functions – including the AC increase, and exploring a possible new replenishment mechanism as well as further increase transparency, accountability, compliance and efficiency – will be crucial for WHO to deliver.