

*152nd Executive board meeting
January 30-February 7, 2023
Geneva, Switzerland*

**Statement from the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Agenda item 12.2**

**Public health emergencies: preparedness and response:
WHO's work in health emergencies**

Thank You Madame Chair.

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Ghana on behalf of 47 African member states.

We appreciate the work of the secretariat to address health emergencies due to infectious diseases, conflict, climate change and others that pose complex and serious challenges to global health.

Over the last few years, Ethiopia was confronted with serious health emergencies due to the conflict in the northern part of Ethiopia, including severe drought.

We have noted that in the report, WHO categorized the emergency situation in northern Ethiopia as grade three, which needs critical response from the secretariat and other stakeholders. However, the level of attention the Secretariat allotted during these past years was unfortunately politically

driven by the Director General. One of the reasons why Ethiopia requested an independent investigation on the role of the Director General based on the governing rules and procedures in place.

Conflict damages health care infrastructure and health care systems which significantly increases mortality and morbidity among communities. Although one of the roles of the WHO is to report such incidents through the SSA on Health Care, we are very much dismayed to still see no reports despite our repeated calls. Our Reports indicate that 3217 health posts 709 health centers and 76 hospitals were partially or completely damaged in six regions, with a total approximate cost of 1.4 million USD. We took note that there is a separate web portal on the crisis on Northern Ethiopia, partially reflecting the reality on the ground. It is deeply regrettable that the Head of this Organization has been vilifying Ethiopia and politicizing the work of the organization. As this is a matter before this body, we expect prompt response.

The Government of Ethiopia has been working with various international stakeholders in the past two years to respond to the acute health needs in the northern part of Ethiopia including the Tigray region. It has established national emergency coordination unit to address healthcare demands of the community affected by the conflict in northern part of Ethiopia and invested more than 40 million dollars in the past one and half year for the sector. A comprehensive plan for recovery and rehabilitation has also been prepared in line with standardized approach and experiences from other countries.

Following the signing of the Agreement on lasting peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities, Agreement signed on 2nd November 2022 in Pretoria in the African Union led peace process, the humanitarian response in the conflict affected areas in northern Ethiopia has improved. The response from our international partners has been encouraging. More repair and coordination of the remaining services are being undertaken. Particularly rebuilding conflict affected health systems would require further international support. We hope WHO will be part of this effort and hence part of the solution.

To conclude, we call upon the secretariat and various stakeholders to work with the Government of Ethiopia to redouble their efforts in supporting the reconstruction of the damaged healthcare infrastructure and the healthcare system better.

I thank you!