

## Statement of the Republic of Moldova

### Poliomyelitis eradication

Thank you Madam President,

Thank you to the Secretariat that prepared the report on poliomyelitis eradication and implementation of the action plan on polio transition.

To ensure the global eradication of poliovirus and to maintain a free-poliovirus status we would like to draw attention to the war in Ukraine. Military actions have resulted in favorable conditions for outbreaks due to the fact that vaccination coverage in the affected areas has decreased and population protection has been lost. It inevitably impacts surrounding regions and countries receiving refugees, especially since the number of children is very high in the migratory flow of the civilian population leaving these areas, about half of the total number of refugees.

Moldova has received over 700 thousand refugees, among them more than 210 thousand children. Currently 43,454 Ukrainian children remain in Republic of Moldova, most of them attending kindergartens and schools. Vaccination data do not exist. At the same time, we cannot ban them from entering in our communities because their medical records have been lost, burned, destroyed.

While the WHO has delivered important work in Ukraine providing crucial support to health systems which allowed for it to keep functioning in time of war, we consider that the immunization programme, including against poliomyelitis, must be a priority on WHO's agenda in Ukraine.

I propose to introduce a separate point in the developed documents that would refer to the management of anti-polio measures among refugees and in polio-free areas but with a potential risk due to some critical factors. This could also be the problem other countries are facing.

It is also worth mentioning that overall polio vaccination has critically decreased during the pandemic which presents a certain risk for all of us. Routine immunization agenda must be respected and fulfilled.

Thank you!