Mr President,
Director General,
Excellencies,

Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by Romania on behalf of the European Union and its member states.

Together with the rest of the world, Malta remains committed to working towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Recognizing the interdependency of all 17 SDGs we also appreciate that good health and wellbeing remain essential for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Although some may have thought it ambitious, last year we welcomed the draft thirteenth General Programme of Work. Through this we will work towards the triple-billion targets and interconnected strategic priorities which aim at ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages, in line with the SDGs. Advancing Health for All- keeping the world safe, and serving the vulnerable while leaving no one behind, is not possible without addressing inequity and the many social and other determinants of health.
As we face the challenges posed by the ever-evolving global health landscape, in recognition of the fundamental importance of universal access to health care, Malta continues to provide an accessible health care system, offering a comprehensive basket of services free at point of use.

The Ministry for Health continues to strengthen Malta’s health system, focusing on sustainability and innovation to ensure UHC into the future. My Government has embarked on the development of an overarching National Health Strategy framework for the period 2020-2030. Mental health was identified as one of the key thematic priorities for accelerated investment, for which a National Mental Health Strategy was developed following broad consultation. It aims to build resilience and transform services, in the community and through new acute mental health services, whilst upholding the dignity, autonomy and rights of all people with mental disorders.

Investment towards the building of new regional health hubs that will provide a ‘one-stop-shop’ for patients with all primary health facilities under one roof is underway. This is another milestone in primary healthcare in Malta. Plans for a new out-patients block for our main government hospital will complement these health hubs. Several initiatives for a greener health system will be incorporated in existing and new health facilities.

Infrastructure and health workforce investments together with innovative management policies have enhanced health care delivery to our growing and diverse population. Exploring new ways of improving efficiency, the Ministry for Health has invested in more sustainable pay-per-use and outcome-based procurement mechanisms which are already yielding positive results, such as with the treatment of hepatitis C.
Digital health innovation continues to be explored through various avenues including the expansion of our myHealth mobile patient-centric platform and the development of a National Electronic Health Records platform.

Malta is proud to continue to play an active role in the WHO EURO Small Countries Initiative, pioneering ideas as best-practices. A notable example is Malta’s successful introduction of transgender services through close collaboration with civil society and all stakeholders. This illustrates my country’s commitment to an intersectoral and participatory implementation of Agenda 2030, leaving no one behind.

Addressing communicable and non-communicable diseases remains high on the agenda. Malta has made positive strides in treating persons living with HIV and is on its way to achieving the 90-90-90 targets, with 90% of all people diagnosed with HIV receiving sustained antiretroviral therapy. Free self-testing HIV kits have been made available this year. Through collaboration with WHO the Ministry for Health has increased advocacy for road safety and patient safety.

Malta continues to support WHO’s transformation to tackle challenges in an effective, efficient, responsive and transparent manner. We support the Director General in continuing to strengthen WHO’s leadership in global health, to keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable.

I thank you.