Chairperson, thank you for according Zambia an opportunity to make a statement on this agenda item, and wish to thank the Secretariat for the report.

Zambia aligns itself with the statement made by Gabon on this agenda item. We wish to applaud the efforts of the Secretariat and other stakeholders in the role played in the implementation of the Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018; and are optimistic that the Polio Endgame Strategy 2019 – 2023 will enable us reach the last mile.

Zambia last reported a true indigenous case of polio in 1995, and imported cases in 2001/2002. Surveillance indicators for polio eradication from 2018 show achievement of a national annualised non-polio AFP rate of 2.8/100,000 and stool adequacy of 85%, with sub-national variances.

While we are proud of this record, the events of the recent past remind us that we cannot afford to relax. We have recorded some measles outbreak in some areas of our country, an indication that immunisation coverage is far from being optimal. This and the fact that we are not an island and what affects our neighbouring countries, affect us as well.

Therefore, we want to earnestly appeal to the Secretariat and all other stakeholders to particularly support our efforts, and those of the entire Region, in overcoming some of the challenges outlined in the Endgame Strategies, and many others, to ensure that the gains made thus far are not reversed.

As the Secretariat embarks on the ramp down for polio resources, we urge a cautious implementation based on a number of factors, including the timing of the IPV introduction, other threats in and out of the country, and many others,
and not only the country’s seemingly “good” performance and adherence to laid down procedures.

I thank you