STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA ON AGENDA ITEM 21.3: PROGRESS IN THE RATIONAL USE OF MEDICINES

Thank you Chairperson for according Zambia an opportunity to make a statement on this agenda item, and wish to thank the Secretariat for a well-articulated report. Zambia aligns itself with the statement made by Niger on this agenda item.

Chairperson, It is gratifying to note that Member States, Secretariat and partners, are working together to promote the rational use of medicines.

The progress made in setting norms and standards for selection and rational use of medicines, surveillance of consumption and use of antimicrobial medicines and the development of advocacy materials on antimicrobial stewardship are highly commendable. However, it is saddening to note that only 65 (or 33%) WHO member states and areas contributed to the first global report on surveillance of antibiotic consumption which was published in November 2018.

To enhance rational use of medicines, Zambia is taking an integrated health systems approach by investing in the key pillars of the health care system through establishment of the drug fund, strengthening Logistics management information systems, built 4 regional Medical Stores Hubs and ongoing mentorship activities targeting health facility staff.

Challenges being faced include lack of guidelines to operationalise antimicrobial surveillance activities at facility level.

We urge secretariat to expedite the development of hospital guidelines on the surveillance of antibiotic consumption, Toolkit to support the implementation of antimicrobial stewardship programmes in hospitals, and heighten provision of technical, material and financial support to Member States.

I thank you.