



**Statement by the Minister of Health of the Republic of Cyprus**

**H.E. Dr Popi Nicolaidou Kanari**

**Agenda item 3 - 76th World Health Assembly**

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Mr Chair,  
Director General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Cyprus aligns itself with the EU statement.

This year, the World Health Organization marks its 75th anniversary. In these 75 years, WHO had a significant role in helping us overcome colossal public health challenges. It has protected us from disease, eradicated smallpox, immunized millions from polio, spearheaded the comprehensive definition of reproductive health, among many other global health initiatives.

Excellencies,

Even though the Covid-19 pandemic is no longer a public health emergency of international concern, the world is still struggling with grief and loss of livelihoods, severely challenged health systems, and economic and social disruption.

It has shown that the current global public health architecture has limitations that need addressing. This is why Cyprus strongly supports

an international pandemic agreement on managing future pandemics and mitigating their impact. The aim is to reinforce preparedness and response, with WHO having a central coordinating role.

The ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has sparked another global health crisis:– mass casualties, loss of life, displacement, destruction of health facilities, and denying civilians access to health services.

As global challenges persist and evolve, tackling them by uniting forces globally and regionally is indispensable. In the eastern Mediterranean climate change is having a serious impact on health as rising temperatures facilitate the increase of virus while dust dispersion aggravates respiratory diseases.

At a national level, Cyprus' national health system has made significant progress in providing quality and healthcare to all our citizens. However, challenges persist, particularly in ensuring universal access to medicines and promoting health equity. We remain committed to addressing these issues through targeted interventions.

Excellencies,

Allow me once again to express my government's appreciation for the opening of the Cyprus WHO Country Office benefitting both Cyprus and WHO.

May I quote that "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." To this end, the Republic

of Cyprus is honored to be an active participant in the long and noble journey of the WHO to improve the health and well being for all.

I thank you.