



Solomon Islands Health Minister's Statement at the 76th World Health Assembly 2023

Mr President - [**will confirm name once elected**], WHO Director General – Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen

Solomon Islands joins other member states in celebrating and commemorating the 75 years of international collaboration in an effort to improve the health and wellbeing of humankind. For 75 years countries came and stood together to fight diseases, harmful substances, habits, practices, environment and socioeconomic factors that prevent children from reaching adulthood, stop young people from attaining their full potential and lead the adult population to premature deaths.

The elimination of small pox in 1980 to the recent COVID-19 pandemic response and the many advances and achievements in between have all demonstrated the need to strengthen health systems in member states and improve linkages between WHO and other development agencies at regional and country level.

On this note, let me utter my words of appreciation to the current Director General, Dr Tedros and all other Director Generals before him for their leadership in steering this magnificent organization over the last 75 years. Solomon Islands has indeed been benefitted much from this august body since we officially became a member in 1983.

WHO's presence in Solomon Islands began with only a Country Liaison Office in 1981 but with the expansion of our population and as demand for more technical support increased, it was upgraded to a WHO Country Representative Office in 2012 and has played an important role facilitating health reform in Solomon. As a key technical development partner, WHO has in recent time, is supporting Solomon Islands in developing a new health administration policy, which will guide health reform priorities, including legislative reforms, in Solomon Islands. The success we enjoy today is a result of partnership at all levels and across sectors as health, as defined by WHO, can only be achieved through a holistic and all of society approach.

While we appreciate and acknowledge the public health successes and achievements of the last seven decades, Solomon Islands looks forward to new opportunities in the next decades to address health challenges of today and towards the future. Thank you Chair