STATEMENT BY GHANA

Agenda item 6 (Document EB146/5)
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE (PHC)

Thank you Mr. Chair.

Ghana joins other delegations in expressing sadness on the sudden demise of Dr Peter Salama, Executive Director of WHO’s Division for Universal Health Coverage. We extend our deep sympathies and condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

Mr. Chair,

Ghana supports the statement made on behalf of the African Group by Kenya on this agenda item, and wishes to take the opportunity to make a statement in its national capacity on this important subject.

I would like to foremost express my appreciation to the Director General and the Secretariat for document EB146/5, an excellent report which highlights the important issues contained in the Draft Operational Framework for Primary Health care, prepared in line with resolution WHA72.2 of the 72nd World Health Assembly.

The Draft Operational Framework’s planned focus on national level action is particularly heartwarming. Also worth commending are the plans to fully take account of the Draft Operational Framework in the WHO’s general programmes of work and programme budgets, with the view to strengthening health systems and supporting countries scale up national implementation efforts on primary health care.

As we are all aware, primary health care (PHC) is an important tool in achieving universal health coverage (UHC). Following the Alma Ata declaration in 1978, many countries in Africa, including Ghana have embraced the idea of improving PHC to enhance effective health service delivery. We know from evidence that primary health service delivery helps to reduce health care inequalities that affect deprived and vulnerable populations the most. Effective PHC service delivery also reduces pressure on higher level facilities and hence financial pressure on governments.

In Ghana, primary health care delivery continues to play an important role in the wellbeing of citizens especially in deprived communities. PHC units serve as
the first line of service and meet the basic health care needs of most vulnerable and deprived communities.

Unfortunately, despite its relevance, most primary health facilities are faced with challenges that hinder their effective operations. These facilities are faced with inadequate resources, inadequate and proper logistics and infrastructure, appropriate staff mix among others. It is against this background that Ghana happily welcomes the preparation of the Draft Operational Framework for Primary Health care, which intends not only to serve as a technical guide for countries in their efforts to improve primary health care delivery, but also to provide professional and technical assistance through WHO’s General Programme and Work and budgets for strengthening health systems and scaling up national implementation efforts on primary health care.

In Ghana, health centres and Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compounds are located at the bottom of the health care pyramid. These are designed to meet the basic health care needs of the population especially in rural areas. In this regard, improving the effectiveness of facilities at the lowest level is key to achieving PHC objectives in Ghana.

The government of Ghana is engaged in continuous work with stakeholders to fine tune a clear complete and coordinated strategy for the implementation of various interventions, policies and legislations related to PHC. The objective is to promote dialogue and action on positioning health primary health care at the centre of efforts to speed up progress toward SDG 3. It is also to explore how to effectively collaborate with other health related sectors to achieve the objectives of agenda 2030. The Draft Operational Framework for Primary Health care, with its menu of policy options and technical support is therefore a welcome addition to the government’s ongoing collaborative effort. Ghana therefore calls on the Executive Board to take a special note of this important report, and support the implementation of the draft operational framework for primary health care by carrying it forward for adoption by the World Health Assembly.

I thank you for your attention.