ITEM 20: DRAFT GLOBAL STRATEGY ON DIGITAL HEALTH 146/26

Thank you chair. We would like to thank the Director General and the secretariat for the report for this item.

As attaining efficient and secure systems for digital health is one of the prime objectives for the Israeli Ministry of Health, we view this document with the utmost importance.

We believe the role of the WHO in implementing digital health strategies can be in setting the best standards and recommendations for member states, and serve as a catalyst for innovation. For example, we have seen in recent years that the FHIR (Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources) standard is being established as a leading standard for information sharing in different countries, most notably the USA. In order to form effective digital health strategy, interoperability such as this is crucial. The WHO can use its unique position to support Member States in the creation and upkeep of these systems according to agreed-upon standards.

Israel believes that a strong digital health strategy is based on the ability to make effective use of the vast amounts of information accumulated within healthcare systems. This requires, among other things, to regulate information sharing standards, as well as appropriate regulatory structures that will enable the effective use of information in various contexts: for research, patient empowerment and the development of new treatment models. We believe it is the role of the WHO to provide standards for regulations around which member states can join together in order to ensure safety of information, efficiency in the healthcare system, and interoperability with data.

Also in the regulatory context, privacy laws need to be adapted to the new age. There is room to adopt a series of concrete recommendations. For example, in an era when patient information is easily accessible and can be used for data, the question is whether the patient's consent is the only important precondition, or if there needs to be more substantial regulation on the agents utilising the information.

The most significant value that an international-level strategy can give countries is through the formulation of concrete recommendations on all those issues that constitute the technical and regulatory infrastructure for information sharing. Infrastructure issues are relevant to all countries, even if the actual implementation is done differently from one country to another.

Of course, there is also great value in mutual insights from the different ways of implementation in the different countries. We therefore propose to establish a network of learning community of the leading digital health officials in the various countries, and we would like to take an active role in the design and community building process. Thank you.

Thank you chair.