Mr. Chair,

Portugal thanks WHO for this report and for all its work on access to medicines. The prequalification of a biosimilar medicine for breast cancer, announced by the DG, is a very good news.

The GSPOA remains a broad and ambitious strategy, which provides a good framework to advance public health-oriented innovation, intellectual property and trade policies.

Member States were the ones who tasked the independent expert panel to conduct an overall programme review of the GSPOA 10 years after its adoption.

In 10 years, the reality changes and new challenges arise. In this area, the very high prices of some innovative medicines, therapies and vaccines is clearly one of those, which threatens the sustainability of all health systems (both of developed and developing countries) and the realization of the right to health.

It is thus, normal and positive that the review panel makes recommendations which were not entirely contemplated in the document of 2008; and it is equally normal and expected that WHO and Member States give them due consideration.

That is why Portugal supported WHA decision 71(9) and that is why Portugal decided to co-sponsor the draft decision put forward by Brazil under this agenda item. The consultations asked therein will enable the full implementation of the 2018 decision and the discussion of critical issues, which can have a real impact on improving access to medicines.

Mr. President,

Portugal firmly believes that increased transparency on the prices of medicines and on the R&D costs has a huge potential to improve access and the affordability of medicines.

In addition, in open and democratic societies, transparency is a core value. Citizens and tax payers have the right to know the prices of medicines and the costs of its production throughout the value chain (especially when public money is used to finance R&D) so that they know how fairly are they being reflected in the final price of the medicine, vaccine or therapy.

I thank you.