146th Executive Board Meeting of WHO: Intervention to be read by Director General Health Services, Sri Lanka on behalf of Mrs. Pavithra Wanniarachchi, Hon. Minister of Health Sri Lanka

- Chair,

- Director General of the WHO,

- Honourable Members of the Executive Board,

- Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me take this opportunity to thank all who have confidence with the Ministry of Sri Lanka. Thank you for appointing me, thus enabling Sri Lanka in continuing as the Vice Chair of the WHO EB.

We are indeed deeply saddened by the loss of Dr Peter Salama, Executive Director for Universal Health Coverage – Life Course. We would like to offer our condescends to his family and Chair may we suggest a special agenda item at the WHA acknowledging his contribution to global health.

We are happy for WHO prequalifying Trastuzumab biosimilar as these drugs drain a lots of resource. We expect WHO to prequalify more and more medicines so that countries could depend on this for procurement.
Sri Lanka expresses its solidarity with peoples of China at the Coronavirus outbreak and values the measures taken by China and DG / WHO and swift action by WHO.

Pavithra Wanniarachchi, Minister of Health and Indigenous Medical Services Sri Lanka conveys that she is unable to attend the Board although she had planned to, due to matters of urgency that she has to remain in Sri Lanka. She conveyed that it is only recently that she assumed office as Health Minister and was looking forward to meeting Dr Tedros. She believes that this would be possible in the near future. She conveys, that under the new President the governments commitment to universal health coverage, primary care strengthening, addressing non communicable diseases will be further strengthened and greater emphasis will be given to policies aligned with health promotion and prevention.

I wish to thank DG Dr Tedros for his address capturing the recent and ongoing developments in the transformation agenda of the WHO.

During 2019 whilst we moved forward with primary care reforms in Sri Lanka, the need to address shortages in Human Resources in Health needs mention. As our region continues to expand services for maternal and child health and has to focus on ageing population, addressing the required skill mix needs special attention.
Chair,  
In addition to chronic non communicable diseases in Sri Lanka we also face the challenge of chronic renal diseases of uncertain aetiology. WHO support was extended more than a decade ago for a base line research into the aetiology but remains in conclusive. We are in need of fresh but urgent attention to this and are interested in collaboration with other member States who may be facing similar situation for want of a prevention strategy. WHO support to solve this mystery in a timely way is much needed.

The transformation agenda has resulted in many global strategies, action plans etc being instrumental in changing the shape of our national agendas. We look forward to sharing our experiences on these.

In conclusion we appreciate the leadership of the Director General of the WHO and also of the Regional Director to South East Asia Region (SEAR), for guiding us to move closer to achieve Universal Health Coverage.

Thank you