



**Statement of the Republic of Slovenia  
152<sup>nd</sup> WHO Executive Board Meeting  
30 January–7 February 2023**

**Agenda Item 2: Report of the Director General**

We would like to express appreciation to Dr Tedros for the work in the past year and his vision for the extended GPW13. We commend the approach outlined in all the five priorities: focus on health promotion, strengthening primary health care (PHC), empowering systems to deal with health emergencies, harnessing science and technology, and solidifying the place of WHO as the leading authority on Global Health.

While COVID-19 has revealed the gaps in our health systems we are now facing additional political, economic, and humanitarian crises, affecting already stretched, underfunded health systems and an exhausted workforce. We need to look for opportunities to ensure sound investments and develop innovative solutions.

Health is lately generating a lot of political attention at highest levels. There is more understanding that investing in health generates great returns and is crucial for the attainment of SDGs. To sustain the momentum and ensure the commitment for investments in health systems we should seize opportunities, such as the UNGA High Level Meetings on UHC, Pandemic Preparedness and Response, and Tuberculosis and demonstrate with good practices and concrete proposals how this could be done.

While there is a consensus, that PHC is a foundation of a strong health system, it should be emphasised that addressing the needs of the whole population requires integration of PHC and public health services. Slovenia has nearly 100 years of the experience with such an approach, which has recently been complemented with strong community engagement in addressing health determinants and ensuring better access to health services for most vulnerable. Social participation and collaboration with Civil society is key to ensure that nobody is left behind.

Many countries are facing migration of health professionals to other countries or sectors. In finding better solutions for sustainable working conditions, we place great hopes in the upcoming discussions at the 5th Global Forum and Human Resources for Health and Tallin and Astana Conferences. More than 70% of the workforce are women, therefore we should better involve them in decision making. Participation of health professionals is crucial when assessing the needs

and developing solutions. What matters the most in implementation is the ownership of proposed changes by those affected.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, enormous attention was, understandably, given to communicable diseases. This has come at an expense of neglecting other public challenges, such as Non-Communicable Diseases including mental health. This remains a largely underfunded, and underprioritized area of work, despite causing most of the burden globally. Tackling NCDs will have massive implications for reaching health equity and the SDGs, even those that go beyond health. For this to happen we will have to find better ways to generate political will and implement the best buys in addressing risk factors.

In prioritising, we must not forget Anti-microbial Resistance that requires more investments into finding new treatments and ensuring prevention through the One health approach.

Slovenia supports the work of WHO and is ready to constructively contribute to solving public health challenges.