World Health Organization (WHO): Seventy-Fourth World Health Assembly (74th WHA)

Agenda Item 14 Health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
Agenda Item 15 Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery

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Chair,

Over the past many decades, the world has made great strides in healthcare, in the fields of maternal and child mortality, malaria, tuberculosis, NCDs, mental health, polio and others, as we work in line with the ambitious Triple Billion Targets, towards the achievement of SDGs. But, a Pandemic of such a large dimension creates a massive challenge to our healthcare systems and workforce as they work around the clock to battle it. It results in worsening inequalities and threatens to reverse progress made towards the achievement of health-related goals and targets.

Although Covid-19 has adversely affected both developed and developing nations, the impact on already-vulnerable populations and resource constrained countries has been disproportionately large. This makes it necessary for WHO to take swift action and provide technical and functional support to Member States, with added emphasis on developing nations, as they make gradual but steady recovery from this crisis.

Chair,

India firmly believes in the achievement of Universal Health Coverage, and in line with this objective, we have fast-tracked initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat, which aims at achieving the 3As (Affordability, Accessibility and Availability) of healthcare.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of timely, reliable and transparent data sharing and has revealed various gaps in the way health information systems are managed. Thus, envisioning a new era of UHC, India launched the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM). NDHM aims to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of health service delivery and will

be a major step towards the achievement of the UN SDG 3.8 of Universal Health Coverage, including financial risk protection.

India has also constituted the National task force on SDG-3 in 2016 chaired by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, which has set up review mechanisms to track progress on Health SDGs and supports SDG implementation at national and subnational level. India has also aligned its national policies, programmes and schemes with the SDG health goals and targets and launched SDG health dashboard to track national and subnational progress for achieving Health SDGs by 2030.

Chair,

There is a need to invest in health workforce for maternal and newborn care and India has already taken steps towards augmenting key areas like midwifery by initiating the midwifery education program of global standard after the high-level launch of the Midwifery Services Guidelines. India is committed to establish the new cadre of skilled and competent midwives that will serve to support maternal and newborn health services and provide respectful care for mothers in various health institutions. We have also developed a strategic roadmap for effective rollout of the Midwifery Initiative, which includes a curriculum, scope and standards of practice, advocacy toolkits and learning resource packages for both the Midwifery Educator programme and Nurse Practitioners. We believe that with our women receiving quality midwifery-led care, we can make greater progress in reducing our Maternal Mortality Rates, in line with SDG 3.1.

Thank you.