



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES**

156th Session of the Executive Board Meeting, World Health Organization,

3 – 11 February 2025

Agenda Item 2 : Report by Director General

Maldives extends its sincere appreciation to Director-General, Dr. Tedros, and his team for the insightful report and steadfast leadership in addressing global health challenges.

The past few years have been turbulent and challenging times for Global Health and indeed for WHO. From the Covid-19 pandemic to multiple and multi-dimensional health emergencies, at the backdrop of geo-political tensions. Despite these daunting challenges, WHO has, not only supported the Member States, but also being able to carry forward, the much-needed reform across the lengths and breadths of the organization.

The reorientation of WHO programming through the successive GPWs has been pivotal, not only in overcoming the disruptions from the pandemic, but also helped Member States in strengthening their health systems, and creating resilient communities. We are encouraged to see critical areas such as Climate Change and Health, mental health, health emergencies, injury prevention and health equity, prioritized under GPW14. These are especially important areas for Small Island Developing States like the Maldives.

We are happy to inform that, guided by the GPW, and with national policies and plans that are aligned with regional and global plans, we have been able to make tremendous inroads towards health equity and ensuring that no one is left behind. Given the geographic isolation of our small island communities, it is paramount, that health services are accessible closer to communities, for better equity, and to minimize care-foregone, access involves costly and difficult travel. The PHC revitalization initiative we piloted in 2023, is very promising and Primary Health Care remains the foundation for achieving UHC and strengthening Health Systems. Access to health services is also enhanced through greater use of digital health solutions. Being at the forefront of climate related hazards, we are also investing in reducing health sector carbon foot-print through green-smart hospital initiatives and incorporating broader climate resilience into healthcare infrastructure.

While we celebrate these achievements, we continue to face many daunting challenges. Noncommunicable diseases, mental health issues, and emerging public health threats continue to overburden our fragile health systems. Global warming, rising sea levels and associated flooding lead to spread of vector-borne diseases, and pose significant threats to our healthcare systems and the well-being of our communities. We urge fellow Member States, and WHO to support smaller climate-vulnerable countries, in their efforts to mitigate climate-related hazards and impact



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

Maldives also welcomes WHO's strong focus on global health security. Ensuring pandemic preparedness and response is of paramount importance to all countries, big or small. As discussions on the Pandemic Agreement progress, it is essential to ensure that it remains inclusive, prioritizes vulnerable populations, and upholds the principles of equity and solidarity.

As we look forward to the next High Level Meeting on NCDs later this year, we also recognize WHO's leadership in tobacco control under the FCTC, and the critical linkage of tobacco with chronic non-communicable diseases. Recognizing the devastation tobacco causes to health and communities, and especially to the young generation, Maldives has taken decisive measures to address tobacco epidemic, including the imposition of a comprehensive ban on e-cigarettes.

We also recognize the importance of meaningful engagement with Member States in planning and monitoring processes to ensure greater transparency, accountability, and country-focused outcomes to maximize impact.

As WHO and global health, are yet again, confronted with new realities, geo-political realities, we must move with a clear and unwavering resolve, to safeguard health and well-being of communities across the globe. Maldives reaffirms its commitment to working in close collaboration with WHO and fellow Member States to achieve our shared vision for global health. Let's make this Session of the Executive Board an opportunity to embrace what unite us, the pedestal for a successful World Health Assembly in May.

Through concerted action, resilience, and collaboration, we can build healthier populations and stronger health systems for generations to come.

Thank you.