

Draft Joint Statement – Delivered on behalf of 41 Cosponsor Member States

Agenda item 9: Universal Health Coverage,

Document EB158/12 “Rare Diseases: a global health priority for equity and inclusion”

**Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues,**

Spain has the profound honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the 41 cosponsor countries of WHA78.11 on Rare Diseases.

At the outset, we wish to express our deep gratitude to the Secretariat for preparing this comprehensive report and for its steadfast work supporting Member States, mapping existing standards, engaging centers of excellence, and providing technical guidance. These efforts provide an essential foundation for advancing global action on rare diseases and bringing the Resolution’s commitments to life.

The adoption of Resolution WHA78.11 in 2025 marked a historic milestone, recognizing rare diseases as a global health priority. It underscores our collective commitment to equity, inclusion, and universal health coverage, ensuring that persons living with rare diseases and their families are not left behind.

We commend the preparatory work undertaken to date, but now we need to accelerate the pace in implementing the resolution’s mandates, particularly the development of the Global Action Plan, which is essential for guiding coordinated, evidence-based action worldwide.

Even in the difficult and complex financial landscape, we emphasize our interest in the realization of the vision of this resolution. The actions it foresees, including strengthening health systems, access to diagnosis and treatment, and supporting centers of excellence, will directly benefit millions of persons living with rare diseases and their families, transforming lives, restoring hope, and fostering dignity.

The investments we make today will yield profound human, social, and economic returns, creating a legacy of health, equity, and opportunity for generations to come.

At this pivotal moment, we urge the Secretariat to accelerate the development of the Global Action Plan on Rare Diseases, to be submitted to the Eighty-first World Health Assembly in 2028. This action plan is not merely a technical document; it is a roadmap for solidarity, global coordination, and transformative action, providing practical guidance for Member States to strengthen health systems, improve early diagnosis, and ensure equitable access to care and evidence-based treatment.

The 41 cosponsor countries reaffirm their unwavering commitment to this historic Resolution. We stand ready to work hand in hand with all Member States, the Secretariat, and partners worldwide, to ensure that no one living with a rare disease is left behind, that scientific knowledge and innovation are shared, and that health systems are empowered to respond to the needs of every individual, everywhere.

We are inspired by the potential of this collective endeavor to turn commitments into action, and action into life-changing outcomes. Together, we can make sure that rare diseases are truly recognized as a global priority, ensuring health, hope, and dignity for millions worldwide.

We thank you, Mr. Chair!!