Chairperson, Botswana notes with satisfaction all the efforts by the World Health Organisation to control and contain the Covid 19 pandemic, one of the most unprecedented outbreaks, and perhaps by far one of the most sobering public health emergencies the world has experienced in a long time. The assistance provided by WHO to member states in order to strengthen their capacities to prevent, detect, confirm, and rapidly respond to public health risks and save lives in accordance with the International Health Regulations, has no doubt mitigated what could have been a telling catastrophe, particularly for the developing countries.

We however still note with concern, some challenges associated with our historically weak health systems such as inadequate resources and emergency response to public health threats. These include coordination, financing, incident management systems, public awareness and community engagement, further compounded by porous borders. We equally note the economic, development and social consequences of this outbreak, and the constellation of threats to lives and livelihoods of our people.
Chairperson, there is need now more than ever, for all members states and development partners to step up health security efforts by reinforcing the development of resilient health systems and improve efforts for prevention, alert and response to public health emergencies. Botswana therefore calls for greater investment in emergency preparedness, to ensure a robust global health risk framework.

Following the outbreak of the epidemic, His Excellency, The President established a multi–sectoral National Public Health Emergency & Preparedness Committee and a National Presidential Task Force to coordinate the response. The main focus of our response is on prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and continuity of the health system. Through our efforts we have so far tested about 13,654 (about 6000/million tests), registered 25 COVID positive cases, 17 recoveries and 1 death.

Botswana will continue to cooperate and join forces with the international community in order to strengthen global health security and through national health response mechanisms as required under the International Health Regulations (2005).

Chairperson, we reaffirm our support of the WHO and its leading role in global health governance and public health emergency. I commend Dr Tedros and his team for a sterling job.

In conclusion I wish to express my appreciation to the frontline workers and support staff everywhere for their hard work and sacrifices.
I thank you.