The Director General of the World Health Organization Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus,
Hon Ministers and Delegations from Member States,
Distinguished Excellences,
Donor Partners and Philanthropists,
Global WHO Technical Support Teams,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am indeed honored to address you all today.
The COVID-19 global pandemic is no doubt an extraordinary event for all humanity and has brought suffering to countless families and communities across the globe.
I take this time on behalf of the Government and the people of Fiji, to express our deepest and most sincere sympathy to governments and
citizens of all nations who have lost loved ones from the COVID-19 pandemic.
Fiji’s Prime Minister, the Honourable Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, has been at the forefront of our fight against COVID-19. His firm leadership and the support of Cabinet and the critical government agencies and statutory bodies, ensured an efficient decision making process and the timely implementation of containment strategies that reduced the risk of spread of the disease in the community.
Three main drivers that greatly facilitated Fiji’s preparedness and response effort were the approval by government for a supplementary COVID-19 budget that provided additional funding to the health ministry, the amendment to the Fiji Public Health Act, and the declaration of a State of Natural Disaster for the COVID-19 disease. The declaration of two states of natural disaster, with one being the result of a disease outbreak is unprecedented in Fiji’s history. However, these critical actions enabled us to make crucial decisions and implement measures that ensured the protection of public safety, the timely intervention for those who were suspected or confirmed with the disease, and the ultimate recovery to those under our hospital care.
Our border control measures were instituted and rapidly escalated as the pandemic continued its global spread.
Social or physical distancing measures that were implemented
nationally included targeted community lockdowns, night curfews, and the closure of amusement centers like cinemas, liquor bars, night clubs, gyms, and community swimming pools.

Our contact tracing teams that include personnel from health, the military and the police force have followed up 100% of all close contacts of the confirmed cases, and continue to follow them up to date.

WHO assisted our laboratory testing capacity firstly through the sending of samples to the reference laboratory in Melbourne, Australia, and later with the opening of our own RT-PCR testing facility at the Fiji Centre for Disease Control on the 11th of March 2020.

As I speak, Fiji has recorded 18 cases of COVID-19, 14 of which had recovered and 4 are still active, with an overall recovery rate at the moment of 78%. Fiji has successfully broken the chain of transmission within the community with strong and timely public health measures, and particularly with the early removal of every case and their close contacts into dedicated health facility with monitored isolation.

Fiji’s experience has shown that a whole of government approach is absolutely necessary with decisive leadership and swift implementations of strategies are critical for lowering morbidity and mortality from this pandemic.

Fiji has also shown that in the presence of the impact of climate change, the ability of a small island nation to mount an effective response to an
outbreak of infectious disease will require a herculean effort that will impact greatly on its resources for many years to come.

I THANK YOU