

World Health Assembly  
18 May 2020

### **National Statement**

**\*\*check against delivery\*\***

- Honourable Chair,
  - Distinguished Director-General,
  - Distinguished Delegates,
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- Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by Croatia on behalf of the EU and its Member States.
  - In the Covid-19 pandemic, we are facing global challenges unlike anything seen before in our lifetime.
  - I wish to pay tribute to all healthcare workers serving on the frontline, in particular those who are doing so in humanitarian settings. They are showing extraordinary courage and dedication in their efforts to respond to this virus and we call for their protection to be ensured around the world.
  - In the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, we also recognise the special contribution of our nurses and midwives, who account for half of the world's health workforce and are playing a critical role in our response to Covid-19.

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- Ireland strongly supports the WHO and believes that the UN system must be central to our global response, across the three pillars of development, human rights, and peace and security. Should Ireland be elected to the Security Council for the 2021-2022 term, we will work to deliver the leadership and engagement expected of the Security Council at this critical moment.
- As we work towards effective treatment and a vaccine, we must ensure that there is equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics and equipment in line with our commitment in the 2030 Agenda to Leave No One Behind.
- Ireland will continue to act in solidarity to help around the world and has already allocated more than €78 million to the global Covid-19 response, including a four-fold increase in our WHO contribution this year.
- As Health Minister, I am also conscious of the importance of maintaining the range of essential health services at this time, including immunisation schedules, and also the priority of strengthening resilience in our health systems to 'build back better'.
- Ireland stands ready to work with the international community to put an end to this crisis as soon as possible. As we say in Ireland “Ní neart go cur le chéile” or ‘There is strength when we come together’.
- Thank you Chair