Dear Director General, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of The Kingdom of the Netherlands. We align ourselves with the statement made by Croatia on behalf of the European Union.

We express our support and appreciation for the World Health Organization. Now, more than ever, effective international cooperation on global health issues - embedded in strong multilateral response and global solidarity - is crucial.

The current collaboration between global health partners is an inspiring example and community engagement is essential.

Development of effective and safe vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics is urgent. Public and private sectors across the globe have to step up their joint efforts. Once available, we will need to facilitate equitable access. Therefore, we welcome the patent pool initiative of Costa Rica and WHO.

Strengthening the implementation of the International Health Regulations and of health systems remains of vital importance. The Netherlands is promoting this as chair of the Global Health Security Agenda initiative.
The COVID-19 crisis is a serious wake-up call that universal health coverage is not a *nice to have*, but a *need to have*.

I would like to echo the words of DG Tedros: ‘No-one is safe, until everyone is safe.’

Meanwhile we should not lose sight of pre-existing crises, and ensure that essential services and activities continue in particular for WASH, mental health and psychosocial support and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The World Health Organisation, all staff and frontline workers can continue to count on our support and we thank you again for your impressive efforts.

Thank you