Seventy-Third World Health Assembly

Statement by New Zealand
Hon Dr David Clark, Minister of Health

This crisis has reinforced the critical importance of healthcare and other essential workers as well as global cooperation. New Zealand has looked to the information and experience of others to help shape a response appropriate for our own national context. We have also been open to sharing our experience in the hope that it will benefit others. Our relationship with the Pacific is particularly important in this respect.

In looking to the future, we will be able to save lives, communities and economies if we commit to building on and strengthening global relationships and mechanisms. In this respect, New Zealand is pleased to co-sponsor the resolution on COVID-19. We very much hope that all Member States join with us in taking the steps towards a new era of global solidarity. It is vital that we uphold principles of non-politicisation and inclusivity when we come together at the international level.

There is much work ahead and New Zealand stands ready to work alongside the WHO, other Member States and organisations. This experience has reinforced the critical role of the WHO and we have borne witness to the excellent support provided to our neighbours in the Pacific, as well as using WHO’s technical products nationally.

In New Zealand we will continue our focus on protecting the most vulnerable in society. As part of this we recognise that people will experience differences in health and wellbeing that are not only avoidable but are also unfair and unjust. In the context of COVID-19 addressing equity means protecting older people and those with underlying conditions. It also means actively focusing on and mitigating any risk that this situation will further exacerbate the inequalities experienced by Maori and Pacific peoples in New Zealand.

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