COVID-19 STATEMENT FOR THE 73rd WHA

Chairperson,
Honourable Ministers of Health,
Director-General of WHO,
Distinguished Delegates,

As the 73rd World Health Assembly opens, the global community is facing one of the biggest public health, social and economic crises.

The primary objective of our national response to the COVID-19 pandemic remains stopping transmission of the virus and caring for those affected. Rwanda’s COVID-19 preparedness and response plan is built around key pillars: leadership and coordination, epidemiological surveillance, community mobilization and engagement, laboratory and diagnostics, case management, and supply chain and logistics.

The national strategy seeks to find any case, isolate and treat, and trace all contacts to break the transmission chains. To date, we have controlled all clusters of cases, maintained low-level transmission and are aiming for no transmission. Rwanda will continue to adapt comprehensive strategies based on risk and vulnerability, including specific interventions for high-risk groups such as truck drivers and health workers. The interventions have been data driven and implemented at individual and community levels. Efforts to address COVID-19 have also been through accelerating research, innovation and knowledge sharing locally and globally.

Rwanda looks to minimize the impact of this pandemic. Our country has ensured that essential health services are not disrupted, and further used innovative means to improve our interventions. Rwanda seeks to ensure that the most vulnerable are protected in our country, and covers their health and non-health requirements.

Our national response also focuses on multi-sectoral collaboration, active participation of health sector partners, involvement of development partners and synergy of the preparedness and response efforts to mitigate and stop this global health emergency.

As we strengthen our national response, it is also important to build upon regional and international response. We believe that stopping the spread of COVID-19 will require strengthening existing surveillance networks while developing population-level active surveillance. There is an opportunity to emerge with increased collaboration and stronger health systems.