STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE EUGENE HAMILTON,
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND HEALTH ET AL., FEDERATION
OF ST KITTS AND NEVIS

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Mr President
Director General,
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Honourable Ministers of Health,
Heads and members of delegations

I am pleased to address this body to share St. Kitts and Nevis’ situation and response to the Covid—19 pandemic. On March 25, 2020, we recorded our first case. Currently, there are 15 confirmed cases with no community transmission. Fifteen persons have recovered with no hospitalizations or deaths. This is a remarkable achievement for the smallest state in the Western Hemisphere.

Our achievement can be attributed to our rigorous public health response, and an all-sectors approach with requisite legislation/regulations to guide our response. Early closure of our borders, scrupulous social distancing, meticulous respiratory and hand hygiene practices and heightened public education awareness programmes were key strategies used to contain spread under the astute leadership of our Prime Minister Dr. The Hon Timothy Sylvester Harris

Our national response included re-capitalisation of our health facilities in terms of equipment, physical infrastructure improvements, human resource capacity-building through a medical arrangement with Cuba, and training of all frontline
personnel engaged in health, business and national security. Our health care system also benefitted immensely from the support of international health agencies such as the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) and the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA).

Our success in addressing Covid-19 is due, in part, to our relationship with Taiwan, who has donated considerable sums of PPE, in addition to providing early expert review of our National Pandemic Response Plans. Taiwan’s own success story stands out for commendation: just 440 confirmed cases, with minimal community spread, in a population of 23 million people. There is much to be learnt from Taiwan’s handling of the pandemic. As has been done consistently over the years, our Country again makes an appeal for Taiwan to be granted full member status in the WHA. Taiwan has made significant contributions to the world: knowledge and technology transfer, mastery of universal health coverage, and disaster response and mitigation.

Mr President: Global success in winning the war against Covid-19 will be largely dependent on strong leadership at all levels - government, the private sector, and civil society. The focus must be on saving lives, safe vaccine development, and recalibration towards a new normal that includes the rights to health and a life of dignity for all people.

I close by expressing condolences on behalf of the Government and people of St. Kitts and Nevis and on my own behalf to all families everywhere and all countries globally suffering loss of lives as a result of this pandemic.

I thank all of our hardworking teams for the many dedicated hours of work keeping us safe; and particularly, I thank our citizens and residents of St. Kitts and Nevis for their cooperation and support throughout this ordeal.

Thank you