

# UKRAINE

## **Statement by Maksym Stepanov, Minister of Health of Ukraine, head of the delegation of Ukraine at the WHO 73<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly (18-19 May 2020)**

**Honourable President of the Assembly,  
Distinguished Director-General,  
Excellencies, Colleagues,**

The 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the World Health Assembly takes place virtually in an unprecedented time in history, amidst one of the biggest health challenges – the COVID-19 pandemic.

Let me express solidarity to all countries affected by the pandemic, as well as condolences and sympathy to all the families of the victims of COVID-19.

The coronavirus is forcing every country, including Ukraine, to reconsider its health care systems. We must learn from best international experience and achievements in the field.

On its part, Ukraine stands ready to make its contribution into accelerating the development of diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics for this novel coronavirus. Ukraine has launched clinical trials of a domestic drug, which, according to the preliminary findings of the Ukrainian scientists and manufacturers, can significantly reduce or completely neutralize the risk of death from complications caused by the coronavirus infection. In addition, the possibility of comprehensive use of this tool for the treatment of coronavirus and for the prevention of the disease is being studied.

Ukraine is grateful to the WHO and its Ukrainian office for all the valuable assistance, technical expertise, and advice in strengthening the capacity of Ukraine's health sector to respond to the challenges of COVID-19. We look forward to further cooperating with the WHO and other international partners in this difficult time towards eliminating the coronavirus.

Emphasis should be made on addressing the public health impact of the pandemic in the temporarily occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. Unfortunately, the ongoing Russian armed aggression makes it impossible for the Ukrainian side to provide assistance to the population therein directly. Aid from the international community also becomes significantly impeded due to continued hostilities, as well as the actual closure of access by the occupation administration for the OSCE SMM, the UN agencies, the ICRC and other international humanitarian organizations.

In this regard, we call on the Russian Federation, as a party to Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, to provide full and comprehensive access for the ICRC representatives, international humanitarian agencies, as well as medical workers to the population of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to deliver qualified medical examination, treatment, and humanitarian assistance.

Against this complex backdrop, Ukraine at the same time continues its efforts to reform the current healthcare system. It is primarily aimed at ensuring that all Ukrainians have an access to quality health services which meet the needs of all segments of society with an infrastructure and staffing that ensures the best possible care for patients and the optimum working environment for healthcare workers.

The next phase of the reform will be built on 5 essential goals, namely to improve health sector governance, continue with the transformation of health sector funding, increase the human resources capacities, enhance the transparency and accountability of the health care system and ensure the system to be dynamic, adaptable and finally improve delivery of services in all disciplines from primary to tertiary level.

We will strive for ensuring that all health care facilities providing specialized and highly specialized medical care receive financial resources at a rate not less than allocations in 2019. Our goal is to increase the relevant funding of health sector up to 6% of GDP by 2021.

At the same time, we are aware that our aspirations, in particular with regard to overcoming COVID-19 pandemic, can only be embodied through global cooperation, unity, and solidarity. Only in this way we can make our planet a healthier place to live in.

**I thank you.**