

THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, GENDER, ELDERLY AND
CHILDREN



**STATEMENT BY HON. UMMY MWALIMU (MP), MINISTER FOR HEALTH, COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT, GENDER, ELDERLY AND CHILDREN ON THE REPORT OF THE
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION DURING THE VIRTUAL
73RD WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY, 18 MAY 2020**

**Madam President,
Hon. Ministers,
Director General,
Distinguished Delegates.**

Madam President,

Tanzania aligns its statement with the statement made by Republic of Congo on behalf of the Africa Region. At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's deepest condolences to those who have lost loved ones because of COVID-19. We also extend our sympathies to those who have contracted the disease, as well as to their families, and pray for their full and swift recoveries. We also wish to extend our sincere appreciation to the medical and public health professionals for their commitment and being on the front line of the pandemic, we offer our deepest respect and gratitude.

Madam President,

The time for full-scale global solidarity and cooperation to fight for health rights is now because no one country would ever be able to prevent or fully control the COVID-19 pandemic on its own. We are faced with an unprecedented situation brought about by the emergence and rapid spread of COVID-19, the biggest public health emergency of our time.

Madam President,

In this regard, we recognise the role of WHO leadership in tackling the pandemic and commend the Director General for his leadership over the past months. We also wish to appreciate many of the innovative and initiatives among them the development of the Task Force on Global Supply

chain, which aims to address the global shortage of medical supplies and commodities.

Madam President,

Tanzania has developed response and mitigation strategies that are in line with the WHO guidelines with the focus to our local context while ensuring that lives and live hoods are protected. We have also continued to learn, from other countries how they are responding to COVID 19 and we realize that no one-size-fits-all model that work for all countries. COVID-19 mitigation efforts need to be adapted to local context as part of a balanced response.

COVID-19 is a National Disaster in Tanzania, and it was declared by **H.E President Dr John Pombe Magufuli**. The Prime Minister, leads the whole of government response. To date there are **509 cases and 21 deaths**. We test using RT PCR all patients who meet Standard Case Definition of which more than 9,000 samples tested, so far, we have acknowledged that more tests need to be done as the epidemic prevail. Due to this reason, we have already established another two (2) testing sites at subnational level and the plans are to expand in phases. We continue building capacity on the area of case investigation, surveillance, contact tracing, case management and IPC, and taking a robust risk communication and community engagement measures.

Madam President,

In relation to cross border surveillance, we reiterate the need for solidarity and cooperation with our neighbours in the spirit of IHR 2005 treaty, and we have already stepped up measures across the borders to screen truck drivers so as to halt community transmission across the borders together

Madam President,

The pandemic has shaped our thinking and creativity. With the global shortage of PPE, we have managed to produce locally PPE including Coverall, Surgical masks within the country, increased local production of hand sanitizers, and have engaged local industries to manufacture ventilators.

We have also learnt major lessons as we embark on UHC and PHC, and this includes ensuring that preparedness plans for **continuity of essential health services** like Immunization, Control

of Communicable diseases like TB, Malaria and HIV/AIDS, Non Communicable diseases, Reproductive, Maternal, New born and Child care and building a robust resilient health system including social care and support system is very important.

Madam President,

Let me also take this opportunity to reiterate the call of our President His **Excellency Dr. John Magufuli** and Africa Union Chair for multilateral and bilateral partners to engender support by providing debt relief to enable the region's economies to build resilience. The economic impact of the COVID 19 crisis on low-and Middle-Income Countries many already burdened by high debt and poverty has been profound.

We therefore call for urgently and on a larger scale than before concessionary financing, grants and debt relief to help through the crisis and beyond. At this juncture, I would like acknowledge great support from different partners both local and international partners, Multilateral and Bilateral Partners, including WHO, UNICEF and other UN agencies, Global Fund, USA agencies, China, Health Basket Fund Partners in Tanzania (Switzerland, Denmark, Canada, Ireland, KOICA, World Bank, UNFPA and UNICEF), Private Sector and NGOs for being instrumental in supporting combating COVID 19 in the Country.

Madam President,

Lastly, I wish to reaffirm my delegation's unwavering support and cooperation to the WHO in undertaking its mandate.

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION.