Statement by Bangladesh

74th World Health Assembly

Agenda Item 25: Health conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

02. We thank the Director General for the comprehensive report on health conditions in the OPT including East Jerusalem and occupied Syrian Golan.

03. We are greatly concerned over the predicament and harsh realities of the Palestinians in the OPT as revealed in the report such as their geographical and economic vulnerabilities; loss of residency rights; structural vulnerabilities of the health system; denial of access to medicines, ambulance and essential drugs; refusal to release mortal remains of the incarcerated Palestinians; and so on. Needless to mention, mental health of the Palestinians has reached its low because of their exposure to Israeli violence and occupation.

04. As such, Palestinian authorities’ power and responsibilities in the sphere of health in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are not visible. We are alarmed that amidst such vulnerability, Israel conducted 11 attacks against schools and 59 against medical entities in 2020. It is worrisome to note that Israeli occupation and blockade as well as unhelpful permit regime are ceaseless even during the pandemic. Regrettably that the OPT health system has practically collapsed.

06. Notwithstanding the above, WHO’s health-related technical, operational and logistical assistance and Country Cooperation Strategy was crucial to sustain the minimum health services in OPT. This apart WHO’s efforts for mobilizing donor support, minimizing barriers to health services and improving
the social determinants of health deserve specific mention. Also, we commend the role of mobile clinic partners to render very basic health services in Area C, H2 of Hebron and Seam Zone.

07. In view of the above, we would like to flag the following:

First, WHO must continue to support Palestinian health system through Country Cooperation Strategy;
Second, the occupying power Israel must ensure medical supplies to the civilian population as per Article 55(1) of the Fourth Geneva Convention;
Third, WHO must continue to strive to enable Health Cluster partners to achieve the health targets;
Fourth, WHO must scale up its critical function for emergency response to Covid-19 pandemic including delivery of essential medical supplies for testing and contact tracing as well as vaccines under COVAX/AMC facility; and
Finally, there must be a permanent ending of the illegal occupation by Israel to ensure Palestinian’s access to sustainable and effective health care services.

I thank you.