REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
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Pillar	**2**	**ONE BILLION MORE PEOPLE PROTECTED FROM HEALTH EMERGENCIES**
Agenda	**17.1**	**COVID-19 Response**

Thank you, Chair.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses significant challenges and continues to impact all countries across the globe. World leaders are compelled to make tradeoffs between disease response and socio-economic consequences because disease containment proved to have repercussions in economic activities. Pandemic response measures have had undesired and devastating effects on the economy and society, especially the poor, the working class, and the vulnerable population.

The assistance provided by the WHO is consistent with the Report of the Director-General and the WHO response initiatives complement the actions we are currently taking – actions highlighted in our National Action Plan against COVID-19.

Pandemics and impacts of climate change know no borders. We call on the WHO to foster regional and global partnerships on data sharing and the Member States to strengthen and deepen collaboration on global research. These steps are critical to support timely decision making at local and regional level, and to improve global technical and operational guidance. Concerted efforts by researchers, policymakers, and implementers should be facilitated by the WHO to ensure that best practices are propagated and contextualized, potential avenues for response are pursued, and lines of communication are strengthened.

We also request the WHO to mobilize strategic support for the Philippines on pandemic preparedness efforts such as long term capacity building and organizational development for locally relevant and globally competitive institutions such as Philippine Centers for Disease Control.

In times of health emergency, human resources for health are critical. WHO needs to exercise leadership in ensuring long term solutions are in place to address the adequacy of health and allied health workforce. We therefore highlight the need to ensure sustainable and equitable mechanisms in global health human resource recruitment, including our migrant health policies. The Philippines calls for initiatives to ensure that migrants, overseas workers and expatriates are protected by host countries. Migrant health has been underappreciated in pandemic response and the rise in xenophobia and vaccine nationalism simply underscores the urgency of this request.

Building upon this report, we invite the WHO and Member States to strengthen plans and actions to springboard the COVID-19 response not only through ensuring the unhampered delivery of essential services, but also protecting and eventually expanding the gains made in implementing Universal Health Care.

Now more than ever, WHO needs to support countries by investing in health promotion. Ensuring that health literate individuals live in safe and healthy settings requires multisectoral action and balance between health and economy. To fully achieve this goal, we recognize the need to create smarter actions and to harness private sector cooperation and ingenuity.

We look forward to global collaborations for long-term investments and sustainable partnerships in health systems strengthening across Member States and we aspire for a future that can safeguard the health and well-being of all people.

Thank you.