Thank you, Chair.

The Philippines commends the WHO for its able guidance to Member States in achieving the triple billion targets, despite the pressures of leading the coordination of the global response to COVID-19. We join Member States in advocating for increased investments in preparedness for resilient and sustainable health systems as the cornerstone of public health. The Philippines repurposed 2.2% of the GDP towards a budget for the COVID19 pandemic response, and economic recovery efforts. But this us a one-time action – what we need is a sustained focus on public health.

We appreciate the robust engagement of WHO with non-State Actors, which the Philippines benefitted from in support of our implementation of the Universal Health Care Law. Through the UHC Partnership, WHO supported the country’s roll out of effective models integrating local government and health service delivery networks; and the national health insurance’s coordination mechanisms with private health insurance and health maintenance organizations. We look forward to the continued support and development of systematic policy and research agenda, and progress reporting linked to the SDGs and UHC metrics. We would also appreciate further details on the budget implications of the WHO transformation process, to see where we can be constructive.

On NTDs, seven out of the 20 NTDs are endemic to the Philippines. We support the marking of NTD day on 30th of January. Forty-eight million Filipinos are no longer at risk for lymphatic filariasis after two decades of implementing the Elimination Program. It will be useful to reflect on the situation and response to NTD, as we celebrate the tireless work of those in the field.

The adoption of the resolution on global health sector strategies on HIV, viral hepatitis and STI is a step in the right direction, if we are to achieve SDG targets to end epidemics and combat other communicable diseases. The Philippines takes its responsibility to provide free HIV services, from testing to life-saving antiretroviral therapy, as a duty to fulfill.

Meanwhile, the Philippines adopted the Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021 through policies that ensure responsiveness to the health needs of persons with disabilities. A global report by end of 2022 and implementation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy will sustain efforts on protecting the right to health of people with disabilities. We, the Philippines, therefore endorses the adoption of the resolution on the highest attainable standard of health for persons with disabilities.

Thank you.