The Philippines appreciates the Secretariat for reporting the progress made in the implementation of the WHO global action plan on promoting the health of refugees and migrants 2019–2023. We fully support the efforts made to ensure the inclusion of refugees and migrants in the global response, in alignment with our position that access to health is a fundamental right and that it does not distinguish on the basis of one’s nationality or immigration status. The Philippines supports with appreciation the efforts and progress made on putting health on the agenda of statistics on refugees and migrants, as well as the conduct of the Apart Together survey, which are in line with building evidence and research to promote the health of refugees and migrants.

The global action plan is relevant particularly to the Philippines in its efforts to ensure access to quality health care services of migrants and refugees, to wit is the passage of the Republic Act 11223 known as the Universal Health Care and the Philippines’ commitments under the 1951 Refugee Convention, its 1967 Protocol, and the 1954 Statelessness Convention. In the midst of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippines actively established surveillance of COVID-19 cases among migrants, refugees and other foreign nationals in-country as well as their successful inclusion in the National COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment and Vaccination Plan. The Philippines included foreign nationals, consisting of migrants, persons of concern such as refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons and members of diplomatic missions and international organizations, in the list of persons for vaccination, in accordance to the prioritization list set by the government.

Further, in alignment to our commitments to the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Philippines has established a medical assistance referral mechanism for migrants and refugees, which provides access to both government and private health care facilities of those seeking medical care, as well as provision of financial medical assistance to protect them from the financial risks of healthcare. Access to the national health insurance program is also made available to migrants and refugees, either through their employers or voluntary contributions.

Again, the Philippines reaffirms its commitment and obligation to international agreements and reiterates its multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder and whole-of-society approach in the mainstreaming of health in the broader context of the protection of migrants and refugees in the country.