Slovakia – Committee A – agenda Item 17.3

Statement of the Slovak Republic
74th World Health Assembly
17.3. WHO's work in health emergencies
(Strenghtening preparedness for health emergencies: implementation of IHR)

Dear Madam Chair,

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement of Portugal delivered on behalf of the EU and its Member States on this agenda point. We are grateful for all evaluation reports made by concerned bodies as well as to all actors for their tireless effort which resulted in proposing the WHO strenghtening Resolution for approval by the WHA.

Slovakia considers the International Health Regulations a strategic pillar of international health security law. However, further reconfiguration will be indispensable in order to eliminate numerous shortcomings identified by the evaluation panels related to pandemic preparedness as well as to the pandemic response.

Alongside, Slovakia appreciates the Report by the Director-General, especially the articulated need for more clarity regarding the respective roles and responsibilities from both, the State Parties as well as the WHO. With this in mind, we would like to draw the attention to the fact that the articles 40 to 43 of the International Health Regulations need further specification in terms of content and its interpretation.

Concerning the International Health Regulations functioning, there are several weak points which we should take a closer look at. The mandate insufficiency together with missing unified reporting system makes the National Focal Point's role incoherent and weak in substance. In this regard, Slovakia conducted a survey in 50 countries on how the National Focal Points are organized. It demonstrated that significant changes are necessary for better performance, globally.

In order to achieve a fit-for-purpose system, it needs to be designed in a way that it facilitates the communication channels among the National Focal Points and it is equally important to strenghten their trainings and assessments. Finaly, in order to secure better delivery, we consider responsive synergies crucial when sharing the best practice.

I thank you.