# Slovakia – Plenary – Agenda Item 3

***Statement of the Slovak Republic***
***74th World Health Assembly***
***Agenda Item 3***
***General Discussion***

*Honorable Chair,*
*Distinguished Director-General,*
*Excellencies,*
*Ladies and gentlemen,*

*Slovakia aligns itself with the EU statement delivered on this agenda item.*

*Slovakia also welcomes the address by Director-General, especially its reference to the protection of the most vulnerable.*

*It has been more than a year now we have entered a period of great concern and uncertainty due to the pandemic outbreak. History rightly tells us that the pandemics are rarely neat, uncomplicated or even easy to deal with. This fact has been proven by the IPPR Panel's report which concluded that the countries have not been sufficiently prepared for such a robust public health emergency. More precisely, it has caused significant disruption in nearly every aspect of our lives and continues to weigh heavily on the societies.*

*In present, it is perhaps a bit easier to look ahead to the end of pandemic, given that the introduction of vaccines vastly contributed to the pandemic burden relieving. It is, however, a fragile dawn with transmission and deaths rates still high. In spite of the fact that the vaccine rollout and its availability is improving, we should not lose sight of critical regions which lacks the access to vaccines or they struggle with its deficiency. At the same time, the vulnerable and marginalized groups should be appropriately safeguarded at national level as they are the ones who suffer largely from the exposure to the disease. For securing it, the social determinants of health should continue to stay high on the WHO agenda and in this respect, Slovakia appreciates very much the WHO technical guidance not only in this sphere but across the whole expert spectrum.*

*Slovakia also welcomes that various reshaping processes are under way starting with the Resolution on strengthening WHO as well as the assessment made by the evaluation panels. This compact overview of the global preparedness and response to the pandemic is crucial in the moment of re-adjusting further steps.*

*Turning to the end of my intervention, I would like to stress that Slovakia will stand firm by its commitments and will work closely with WHO in supporting common efforts in order to build a healthy, safe and fairer world.*

*Thank you.*