

European Union

Statement

WHO

74th World Health Assembly
(24 May-1 June 2021)

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WHA74 Item 3: Address by Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General

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Geneva, 24 May 2021

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Draft EU Statement

Chair,

Director General,

Excellencies,

Colleagues,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia[*], Montenegro* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The pandemic revealed long-standing challenges to respond rapidly and effectively to public health emergencies. It overwhelmed health systems, burned out workforces and brought deep social and economic consequences, worsening inequalities.

This crisis underlines the importance of global cohesion and international cooperation, and we thank WHO's leadership and its staff for their work in global response showing commitment in mitigating these impacts.

The EU is committed to global Public Health, leading the strengthening of WHO's Emergency preparedness and response by proposing a Resolution to this

[*] The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

WHA and alerting for the need to fully implement the IHR and to strengthen its tools. We support the development of a Universal Health and Preparedness Review mechanism, as a key-enabler of increased trust, collaboration and accountability between Member States and resilience for Health Systems.

Excellencies,

We believe that no one is safe until everyone is protected. Timely, fair, and equitable access to quality, safe, affordable, and effective vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics against COVID-19 as a global public good are essential. However, this can only be achieved with greater solidarity and transparency. We commend the role of WHO in coordinating the ACT Accelerator and leading its health systems pillar.

To this end, Team Europe allocated more than EUR 40.5 billion to the COVID-19 response. We are key supporters of the ACT-Accelerator across all its pillars. We are by far the largest COVAX Facility contributor including with dose sharing and we supported the rollout of vaccination in countries with critical humanitarian needs and fragile health systems. Every 3rd Euro comes from EU and its MS.

We remain committed to support the development of production capacities of health products through an adequate environment: boosting regulatory frameworks, supporting technology transfer and expertise, as well as regional manufacturing hubs and research capacity.

Excellencies,

We recognize the pandemic impact on NCDs, including cancer, as well as mental health conditions, other infectious diseases, AMR, and many health programs including immunization, which compromises health gains made over the past decade. As a result, we emphasize the need for strengthened health

systems capable to withstand shocks while maintaining essential services, and the need to reinforce and support health workers and protect persons and groups in vulnerable situations. Community engagement, particularly from women and girls, respect of human rights in all stages of preparedness and response, and robust policies to prevent and address abuses must be underscored.

This pandemic must be a game changer. By the conclusions of the evaluation panels, we are called for nothing less than a "reset of global health preparedness" and to design a new global health architecture with a possible international instrument, to prevent the reoccurrence of similar crisis in the future. Strengthening WHO is the first step, but we need to cooperate across international, multilateral, and multisector levels, through a whole-of-government, whole-of-society, and 'One Health' approach.

If we want to make the world safer, we must start now.

The EU and its Member States call for all States to harvest the political momentum and take on the responsibility to build a healthy, safe, and fairer world.

Thank you.