Chair,

The Covid-19 pandemic has strained the capacities of the global health infrastructure and highlighted the need for the United Nations system to redouble its efforts to support all Member States.

The IAEA and the WHO enjoy a longstanding and close partnership in areas such as non-communicable diseases, nutrition, vector-borne diseases and on improving radiation protection and safety of patients and health workforce. Our successful partnership lies on different arrangements, such as the IAEA/WHO Joint Programme on Cancer Control, the participation in the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Non-Communicable Diseases, the Joint Programme on Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control, the Global Breast Cancer Initiative (GBCI), IAEA-WHO Postal audits, IAEA-WHO Network of Secondary Standards Dosimetry Laboratories (SSDL), the Joint Radiation Emergency Plan of the International Organizations and the Inter-Agency Committee on Radiological and Nuclear Emergencies.

In spite of the challenges faced during the pandemic, our collaboration has not stopped. The IAEA, WHO and IARC continue to collaborate, through regular annual strategic consultations and day-to-day coordination, to harmonize and deliver on a multitude of cancer control interventions and programmes. For example, throughout this pandemic, we have maintained health safety measures to ensure that our 24/7 emergency response capacity is always fully available. Furthermore, the IAEA published technical guidance documents and publications on how to ensure continuity of essential radiation medicine
services during the pandemic. Recently, we published a technical guidance document on the procurement of radiotherapy equipment for cancer treatment; moreover, the joint IAEA/WHO/IARC imPACT review missions have also been expanded to incorporate a review of childhood cancers.

The IAEA more recently expanded its collaboration with the WHO in the context of two new initiatives, namely the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) Project and Rays of Hope. These two initiatives are focused on the use of nuclear and related techniques for the early detection of zoonotic diseases at the animal/human interface, and on increasing access to radiation medicine for cancer diagnosis and treatment respectively. These initiatives, of common interest to both organizations will largely benefit from the complementary expertise of the IAEA and the WHO.

We will continue building on the success of our partnership with the WHO in response to the new challenges brought by the pandemic and to support all efforts to build back better and realize the goal of One Health for all.

Thank you Chair.