

Agenda item 15.4 – Climate change, pollution and health

Honourable Chair, Director General, Dear Delegates,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the EU statement and supports the presented reports. Climate change presents a fundamental threat to human health. It affects the physical environment as well as all aspects of both natural and human systems – including social and economic conditions and the functioning of health systems. Climate change is also having an impact on our health workforce and infrastructure, reducing capacity to provide universal health coverage (UHC). Global challenges related to climate change directly and indirectly affect human life and health.

Increased extreme weather events threaten people's lives and health, cause material damage and deprive the population of their livelihoods. The pressure of climate change on public health has recently become increasingly evident in the Republic Bulgaria. Prolonged heat waves, droughts, extreme rainfall, floods and other disasters are associated with human casualties, material damage and place an additional burden on the health system and the national budget. Some of the health impacts of climate change are indirect, such as a reduction in the quantity and quality of agricultural production, deterioration in drinking water quality, the spread of water- and food-borne diseases and other vectors, climate migration, etc. In this sense, WHO's call for the health sector to engage on climate change in the context of mitigation and adaptation is timely, relevant and necessary.

The Republic of Bulgaria outlines the importance of the effective cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination of joint efforts of governmental structures for climate change adaptation and protection of human health and well-being through. This is also enshrined in the National Health Strategy 2030.

The Republic of Bulgaria fully supports the proposals presented in Document EB154/24. The issues discussed concerning the improvement of chemicals and waste management as well as the prevention of plastic pollution are of utmost importance for ensuring a healthy living environment.

Finally, active and targeted actions by countries aimed at achieving a favorable living environment are needed, which in turn is a prerequisite for protecting and maintaining health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

Concerning the resolutions to be adopted under this agenda item, Bulgaria fully aligns with the EU Explanation of position to be delivered on the use of “those” in “those in vulnerable

situation”, which Bulgaria, following the rights-based person-centered approach, understands likewise to refer solely to “persons”.

Thank you!