

Honourable Chair, Director General, Dear Delegates,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered by Belgium on behalf of the EU and its Member States and supports the Director General's comprehensive report. We commend Dr. Tedros's and his entire team (at the three level of the organization) continuous efforts to address global health challenges in a timely and effective manner.

Climate change, re-emerging infectious diseases, armed conflicts and forced migration affect undoubtedly the global health. It is by no means certain that such complex problems go beyond the national abilities to respond.

In this context, health security and PPPR (pandemic prevention, preparedness and response) **are of high priority at national, regional and global level.** We would like to thank to all delegations for the hard work in the INB and IHR amendment processes. Bulgaria as an EU Member State is a sustainable, constructive and reliable partner in both processes. From the very beginning we have outlined that in times of severe resource limitations, response to global health threats should not duplicate or overlap initiatives, bringing additional financial, administrative and reporting burden to governments. The outcome of both processes should be realistic, measurable, and achievable, implementable by all of us without leading to additional strain on pandemic-depleted national health systems and healthcare human resources. The latter include the delegates also. They so devotedly committed to achieving meaningful outcomes in both processes, especially during the last months of day and night sessions.

Another major challenge that health systems currently face is Health and Care Workforce. The global tendencies affect all of us. Ageing workforce, insufficient attractiveness of some health specialties for the younger generations, uneven territorial distribution, due to internal and migration to larger settlements, and external migration have to be in our focus for joining forces and addressing these shared concerns together.

Another priority for the health sector globally is the Universal Health Coverage with its major driver Primary Health Care, which plays a key role in securing inclusive and equitable access to health services while providing financial protection. Access to the healthcare system for all Bulgarian citizens is regulated by the law, without discrimination based on any criteria. In Bulgaria, the Primary Health Care system has been established a long time ago. It includes also the General practitioners who work in individual or group practices. Moreover, the patients in Bulgaria have access to Specialised Outpatient Health Care, Emergency Medical Care (including EMT aviation care) and inpatient care. Many treatment activities for the uninsured patients are being paid for by the state budget.

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Bulgaria welcomes the strategic vision for 14th WHO General Programme of Work. We appreciate WHO efforts on its three levels to fulfil its mission to attain the highest standard of health for everyone despite the arduous times we live in. We stand ready to jointly achieve the expected tangible results, mindful of the specific national context.

Finally, it is by no means certain that strategic goals and objectives require sustainable and predictable financing. We do believe that WHO will secure transparency and accountability of the mobilized resources, thus safeguarding cost effectiveness and efficiency of actions in the domain of global health as a common good.

Thank you!