



Statement of Ireland

77th session of the World Health Assembly

Item 14.1 WHO's work in health emergencies

30 May 2024

Honourable Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

- Ireland aligns with the statement delivered by Belgium on behalf of the European Union and its Member States
- The protection of health in emergencies is a priority for Ireland, and we commend and applaud the WHO for its deep commitment to securing health and well-being for populations living in hard-to-reach and often hostile environments.
- We are deeply concerned at the growth in humanitarian need globally. We note in particular how the escalation of conflict across regions and the impact of climate change, are driving an increased demand for emergency healthcare.
- Equally, we take note of the number and severity of disease outbreaks witnessed in recent years. The need to invest in effective systems for

prevention, preparedness and response to disease outbreaks, including pandemics, has never been more pronounced.

- We are mindful of the challenging operating contexts for WHO staff and healthcare workers globally. We condemn, in the harshest terms, attacks on health and reiterate our call for all parties to conflict to respect international humanitarian law.
- Protecting the health and well-being of the most vulnerable is a priority for Ireland, in particular the needs of women and girls, many of whom face heightened risk of sexual violence during times of conflict or upheaval. The WHO's work to protect sexual and reproductive health in crises is vital. This includes life-saving maternal and new-born care, and the prevention and treatment of communicable disease such as HIV.
- The near collapse of the health system in Gaza is a source of deep distress and concern. Ireland commends the strong role being played by WHO staff, who have been at the forefront of the international humanitarian response.
- All hostages must be released, further civilian casualties must be avoided, and there must be full, safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian aid to the civilian population of Gaza.

- I conclude by reaffirming Ireland's support for the draft resolution on Strengthening Health Emergency Preparedness for Disasters Resulting from Natural Hazards and call for its adoption as drafted by consensus.

Thank you.