



Statement of Ireland

77th session of the World Health Assembly

Item 3 General Statement

27 May 2024

Honourable Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ireland aligns with the statement delivered by Belgium on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

I am delighted to have this opportunity to reiterate Ireland's continued support for WHO's essential work and its central role in the global health architecture.

Ireland welcomes the launch of the WHO Investment Round. The WHO needs to have security and flexibility of funding to ensure it can plan and respond effectively to global health issues.

Ireland is making important progress in reforming our own healthcare system.

We have made considerable strides in modernising our mental health services.

We were one of the first countries to implement a whole-of-Government suicide-prevention strategy. Recognising the profound psychological impact of social

media and unregulated screen time on younger people, we are taking a coordinated approach to tackling online safety.

Given the negative health impacts of tobacco usage, we the Government has decided to increase the minimum legal age of sale of tobacco products from 18 to 21.

We are embedding and expanding women's health services. Over €11 million has been invested in the 2024/2025 action plan which will support the evolution of specialist menopause services and expand free contraception for women aged 35.

If Health Coverage is to be genuinely universal, it should be affordable, accessible and inclusive embracing all health services, including those related to Sexual and Reproductive Health as set out in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ireland has scaled up its support for actions that will reduce unintended pregnancies and increase access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Protecting the right to health for girls, woman and mothers is a precursor to gender quality and sustainable growth and development.

The Irish Government's international development policy, 'A Better World', prioritises gender and equality and provides for a number of new initiatives in this area.

Our international development policy also emphasises the importance of protection of health in humanitarian settings. We are deeply concerned at the increase in attacks on health during armed conflict and condemn all attacks on health workers.

Finally, I want to recognise the WHO's vital contribution to health in emergencies. Ireland applauds the vital role of WHO staff, who have been at the forefront of the international humanitarian responses.

Thank you.