***Statement of the Slovak Republic***
***178th Session of the World Health Assembly***
***Agenda Item 13.3Universal Health Coverage***
***19-27 May 2025***

***Mr. Chair, Director-General, distinguished delegates,***

*The Slovak Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. We echo the concerns raised regarding the persistent gaps in achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the urgency to advance health system reforms. At the same time, Slovakia would like to provide additional reflections, highlighting specific areas of focus and proposing concrete measures to accelerate progress.*

*Slovakia fully supports the emphasis on* ***primary healthcare (PHC)*** *as the foundation of UHC. We agree with the EU that PHC, when adequately resourced and person-centered, can transform health systems and extend life expectancy globally. However, achieving this vision requires:*

- ***Enhanced Workforce Capacity****: Slovakia underscores the need for sustained investments in education, training, and retention of health workers, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Targeted strategies, including leveraging platforms like the WHO Academy, can address the projected global shortfall of 11.1 million health workers by 2030.*
- ***Community Participation****: Engaging communities in the design and evaluation of PHC services ensures equity, accountability, and resilience. Slovakia recognizes social participation as a critical lever for improving health outcomes and strengthening trust in health systems.*
- ***Digital Integration****: National strategies for integrating digital health solutions into PHC can improve access, efficiency, and data-driven decision-making. Slovakia calls on WHO to provide technical assistance for implementing scalable digital health models.*

*Slovakia emphasizes the critical importance of* ***sustainable financing*** *to advance UHC:*

- ***Innovative Financing Mechanisms****: Exploring domestic and international approaches, such as regional pooled procurement systems, can enhance affordability and equitable distribution of medicines and health technologies.*
- ***Eliminating Financial Barriers****: Slovakia supports reforms that reduce impoverishing out-of-pocket expenditures, particularly for essential medicines and services.*

*To ensure progress, Slovakia urges WHO to strengthen its normative guidance on sustainable health financing models and assist Member States in aligning national budgets with UHC goals.*

*Building **resilient health systems** is essential for both advancing UHC and addressing future health emergencies. Incorporating climate considerations into health system planning to mitigate the growing impacts of climate change on public health.*

*Slovakia emphasizes the importance of robust **monitoring and evaluation** mechanisms:*

- ***Health Information Systems**: Modern, fit-for-purpose data systems are needed to track UHC progress effectively. Slovakia welcomes the forthcoming UHC Global Monitoring Report and calls for the expansion of tools to assess health system performance.*
- ***Equity Metrics**: Addressing inequalities requires data disaggregation by income, gender, and geography to identify and close service gaps.*

*Slovakia urges WHO to enhance its role across all levels - **global, regional, and country** - in advancing **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**. At the **global level**, WHO should **extend its UHC strategies beyond 2030**, ensuring alignment with long-term global health objectives. **Strengthening resource mobilization mechanisms** will be critical, enabling sustained progress in low- and middle-income countries. Furthermore, WHO should **advocate for the integration of health into broader global development agendas**, reinforcing the interconnectedness of UHC with economic growth, education, and equity.*

*At the **regional level**, Slovakia emphasizes the importance of **facilitating platforms for knowledge exchange** among Member States, allowing for the dissemination of best practices and lessons learned. **Tailored capacity-building initiatives** should be prioritized, addressing the unique challenges of each region. Moreover, WHO should support efforts to **address cross-border health system challenges**, fostering regional solidarity and collaboration, especially in areas with high migration or shared health threats.*

*At the **country level**, Slovakia highlights the need for **technical assistance** to support the implementation of **primary healthcare (PHC) reforms**. WHO's guidance is vital for **developing digital health strategies** that enhance efficiency and accessibility, particularly in underserved areas. Additionally, **strengthening health workforce planning** is essential to address global shortages and ensure equitable distribution of resources within countries.*

*In preparation for the **third high-level meeting on UHC in 2027**, Slovakia recommends several priorities for WHO. Developing a **comprehensive global action plan** with clear milestones and accountability mechanisms will help accelerate UHC progress. **Investment in research and the development of cost-effective health technologies** and scalable digital solutions should be prioritized to improve service delivery and reduce financial barriers. **Equitable partnerships** must be strengthened among Member States, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, ensuring **resource constraints and service delivery gaps** are addressed comprehensively. These efforts will position WHO and its Member States to achieve meaningful advancements in UHC and deliver on the promise of **health for all by 2030**.*

*In conclusion, Slovakia reaffirms its commitment to advancing Universal Health Coverage in collaboration with WHO and Member States. By prioritizing primary healthcare, addressing financing gaps, and building resilience, we can ensure equitable access to quality health*

*services for all. Let us work together to accelerate progress and deliver on the promise of UHC by 2030.*

*We express our thanks and support for the work of WHO and Member States on this agenda item and its documents and confirm our* ***co-sponsorship of the resolution*** *"****Rare diseases, a global health priority for equity and inclusion****", as well as* ***the resolution*** ***"Strengthening national capacities in evidence-based decision making for the uptake and impact of norms and standards"****.*

*Thank you.*