



SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL STATEMENT
78TH SESSION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
19-27 MAY 2025

COMMITTEE B

**ITEM 27: COLLABORATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND WITH
OTHER INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS**

***Decision: Raising The Flags of Non-Member Observer States at the World
Health Organisation (WHO)***

Chairperson,

South Africa calls on the World Health Assembly (WHA) to support the decision *Raising the flags of non-Member Observer States at the WHO*, which we are pleased to cosponsor.

This builds on the WHA resolution 77.15 on *Aligning the participation of Palestine in the WHO with its participation in the United Nations (UN)*. The State of Palestine's flag has flown at the UN since September 2015 and as such, should be similarly hoisted at the WHO.

This decision also accords with the objective of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Emergency Special Session resolution 10/23 on the State of Palestine's UN membership. In so doing, it forms part of efforts to go some way to righting a historical wrong; namely, the need to grant full UN membership to the State of Palestine, for which it is certainly qualified under Article 4 of the Charter.

South Africa therefore regrets that the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) failed to adopt the resolution recommending the admission of the State of Palestine in this regard, which is a testament as to why we have consistently called for the Council's reform.

The State of Palestine's full UN Membership is particularly critical, given the human tragedy unfolding in Gaza. Israel's genocidal actions have reduced Gaza to ruins, strewn with the blood of the innocent, where those who have managed to survive cling to a life of starvation, deprivation and disease.

The WHA's endorsement of this decision would therefore send an important message to Palestinians that they have not been forsaken. It would demonstrate that the Palestinian people's right to self-determination is inalienable and as such, cannot be subject to a veto, nor erased.

Indeed, all our actions on Palestine at the WHA must be guided by this principle. We have a moral and legal duty as member states to use all the measures at our disposal to ensure an immediate end to Israel's unlawful occupation.

I thank you.