

Draft 1

Kingdom of Tonga intervention for the *opening plenary of the Seventy-eight World Health Assembly*

- Esteemed President,
- Director-General of the World Health Organization,
- Excellencies, honourable ministers and colleagues.

1. Malo I lelei from the **Kingdom of Tonga** and good health to you all.
2. Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge and thank the Honourable Minister of Health from the Cook Islands for the intervention on behalf of the 22 Pacific Island countries and areas.
3. Tonga acknowledges the importance of the Healthy Island Vision on its 30th Anniversary, and we look forward to participating in framing the way forward to 2050, in line with the Pacific leader's vision for "a resilient Pacific region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, that ensures all Pacific peoples can lead free, healthy and productive lives."
4. Tonga too is pleased that this year's theme, "**One World for Health**", captures the essence of our shared commitment to advancing public health through collaboration and solidarity.
5. The "**One World for Health**" theme resonates with the principles discussed during WHA 77, particularly the "**One Health**" approach that emphasizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health, advocating for integrated efforts across sectors to achieve optimal health outcomes.
6. Tonga recognises the need to further invest in primary health care to advance **universal health coverage** and to continue to advance our collective efforts to achieve the **2030 Sustainable Development Goals**.
7. Tonga continues to plan and prepare for health risks to enhance our response to health threats posed by **Climate Change and Health Emergencies**.
8. Tonga acknowledges the need to address both the social and commercial determinants and root causes of ill health across sectors, especially in our on-going battle to address the **NCD crisis**.

9. Tonga welcomes the **Amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR)** including defining a "**pandemic emergency**" to trigger more effective international collaboration and the need to establish mechanisms to support developing countries, especially Small Island Developing States in pandemic preparedness and response.
10. Tonga welcomes the **Resolution on Health and Climate Change** that recognizes climate change as an imminent threat to global health, especially in Small Island Developing States and the need to build climate-resilient health systems.
11. The "**One World for Health**" concept is fundamental in addressing challenges like vector borne diseases, and environmental health threats, antimicrobial resistance and the need to expand and improve a '**One Health**' approach to laboratory services.
12. The "**One World for Health**" concept aligns with WHO Member States, and especially Small Island Developing States focus on the need for a more collaborative approach to enhance **Global Health Security and Resilience**.
13. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our many development partners for their generous continuing financial and technical support.
14. Lastly but not leastly, on behalf of our government, health workers and people of Tonga, I would like to take this unique opportunity to thank **WHO** for its continual support to Tonga across a range of health challenges, especially in this current challenging global economy.

MALO 'AUPITO AND THANK YOU

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