



Republic of the Gambia
Ministry of Health
The Quadrangle
Banjul

SEVENTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER, GENEVA 18-23 MAY 2026

Agenda Item: 12.4	Universal health coverage Draft global strategy for integrated emergency, critical and operative care, 2026–2035
Documents	A79/5 and EB158/2025/REC/1, decision EB158(4)
Requested action	Take note of the report on universal health coverage: draft global strategy for integrated emergency, critical and operative care, 2026–2035 and adopt the decision EB158(4)
Time limit	3 minutes
Commission	B

Chairperson, Director-General, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,

The Gambia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the WHO African Region and welcomes the report by the Director-General on the Draft Global Strategy for Integrated Emergency, Critical and Operative Care for the period 2026–2035.

We recognize that timely access to quality emergency, critical and operative care is essential to reducing avoidable mortality and morbidity, strengthening health system resilience, and advancing progress towards universal health coverage.

Chair,

At the national level, The Gambia is integrating emergency, critical and operative care within its broader health system reform agenda. These services are embedded within our **National Health Sector Strategic Plan** and **Essential Health Services Package.m**.

We have taken steps to strengthen **emergency care organization and triage systems**, expand and equip emergency units in major facilities, and improve **referral and**

ambulance services, particularly for obstetric, trauma and medical emergencies. Critical care capacity is being gradually enhanced, including maternal, neonatal and surgical services.

In recognition of the central role of safe surgery and anesthesia, The Gambia is implementing its **National Surgical, Obstetric and Anesthesia Plan**, with emphasis on district-level service readiness, patient safety, infection prevention and control, and access to essential equipment and supplies.

We also acknowledge the importance of the health workforce and health information systems in delivering these services. Efforts are ongoing to strengthen **training, task-sharing and supervision** for emergency and critical care providers, supported by the use of **digital tools** to improve referrals, clinical decision-making and routine data use.

While progress has been made, challenges relating to financing, workforce availability and equitable access remain. In this regard, we consider the Draft Global Strategy to provide a coherent and practical framework to support country-led implementation, aligned with primary health care, health security and universal health coverage.

The Gambia supports the adoption of the Draft Strategy I thank you,