



Republic of The Gambia
Ministry of Health
The Quadrangle, Banjul

SEVENTY-NINETH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MINISTER, GENEVA, 2026

<u>Agenda item 12.5</u>	Primary health care
<u>Documents</u>	<u>A79/5</u>
<u>Actions requested</u>	note the report and provide guidance on priorities in preparation for the third United Nations high-level meeting on universal health coverage, to be held in 2027, by considering the following questions. ✓ How can WHO and its partners further drive prioritization of the PHC approach as the most effective pathway to universal health coverage? ✓ What additional support do countries need to address persistent challenges in implementing the PHC approach? ✓ What is required to ensure effective exchanges of knowledge and experiences among countries on PHC implementation?
<u>Time</u>	<u>2mn</u>
<u>Commission</u>	<u>A</u>

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

The Gambia, welcomes the Consolidated report by the Director-General (A79/5) on primary health care (PHC). Primary health care remains the most effective, equitable, and sustainable pathway to achieving universal health coverage, particularly for countries in the African Region. We encourage WHO and its partners to continue advocating for PHC as the organizing principle of health systems, ensuring that global initiatives, financing mechanisms, and disease-specific programmes are aligned with nationally defined PHC priorities. Strong political leadership and consistent global messaging are essential to sustaining momentum for PHC-centred reforms.

To address persistent implementation challenges, we underscore the need for sustained investment in health workforce development, availability of essential medicines and diagnostics, functional referral systems, and PHC-oriented financing. In The Gambia, primary health care forms the backbone of our health system. We are strengthening PHC through expanded community-level and facility-based services, training and deployment of frontline health workers, and the integration of promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative services.

We join the African Region in calling for the strengthening of South–South cooperation and regional peer learning on PHC. WHO is well positioned to support this through regional learning networks, documentation of implementation experiences, and technical platforms that encourage adaptation of proven approaches.

Chair,

As we look ahead to the 2027 High-Level Meeting on UHC, we reaffirm that renewed investment in primary health care is essential for resilient health systems, improved health outcomes, and sustainable development. The Gambia stands ready to continue working with WHO, Member States, and partners to advance PHC and accelerate progress towards universal health coverage.

I thank you.