



Republic of the Gambia
Ministry of Health
The Quadrangle
Banjul

SEVENTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER GENEVA 2026

item 15.1	Strengthening Rehabilitation in Health Systems
Documents:	Document A79/5
Requested action:	Note the report
<i>Time limit:</i>	<i>3 minutes</i>
<i>Commission</i>	<i>B</i>

Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The delegation of The Gambia, speaking in alignment with the WHO African Region, welcomes the consolidated report by the Director-General (A79/5) and EB158/26 on strengthening rehabilitation in health systems. We take note of the report and commend the Secretariat for its continued efforts to advance rehabilitation as an essential component of primary health care and universal health coverage. On the first question concerning next steps in collecting baseline data and setting global targets, we support a phased and pragmatic approach. We agree that credible country baselines must precede the adoption of global targets. In many African countries, including The Gambia, rehabilitation data remain limited and fragmented. We therefore support prioritizing standard definitions, minimum datasets, and national capacity-building before setting targets to ensure feasibility, ownership, and accountability.

We encourage the Secretariat to focus on a small, feasible core set of indicators that can be integrated into HMIs. Priority should be given to service availability, workforce, service utilization, and integration across levels of care, particularly within primary health care.

In The Gambia, rehabilitation services are integrated into the Essential Package of Health Services and the National Health Sector Strategic Plan. Rehabilitation services are increasingly aligned with noncommunicable disease services, injury care, disability inclusion, and ageing, including referral pathways and continuity of care.

We agree with postponing the release of the first global status report on rehabilitation services, if it allows additional time to strengthen national baselines, improve data quality, and ensure meaningful representation from all regions, including the African Region. A global report should serve countries by reflecting reality and informing action, rather than highlighting data gaps. Rehabilitation is increasingly recognized in The Gambia as a contributor to health system resilience and social inclusion. We are advancing health workforce development, policy alignment with the National Disability Act, and partnerships to expand access to rehabilitation services.

We call for continued WHO normative leadership, targeted technical assistance, and structured peer learning to embed rehabilitation within health systems. The Gambia stands ready to work with the Secretariat and other Member States to ensure that rehabilitation measurement, targets, and reporting support equity, feasibility, and progress toward universal health coverage.

I thank you.