



Republic of the Gambia
Ministry of Health
The Quadrangle
Banjul

SEVENTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER, GENEVA 2026

Agenda Item: B	Increasing Access to Medical Oxygen (resolution WHA76.3 (2023))
Documents	A79/26 and A79/26 Add.1
Requested action	Note the report
Time limit	2mn
Commission	B

The Gambia aligns itself with the statement on Increasing Access to Medical Oxygen (resolution WHA76.3 (2023)) delivered by Niger on behalf of the WHO African Region

For The Gambia, medical oxygen is not an abstract global priority; it is a daily, life-saving necessity. Oxygen is essential for the treatment of childhood pneumonia, the management of obstetric emergencies, surgical care, and the response to critical illnesses. Ensuring equitable access to oxygen is therefore central to saving lives and strengthening our health system.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed significant gaps in our oxygen ecosystem, including limitations in production, distribution, maintenance, and clinical use. We have expanded oxygen production through the installation and upgrading of oxygen plants at key referral hospitals, deployed concentrators and cylinders to regional and rural facilities, and strengthened training for health workers on oxygen therapy and pulse oximetry. We are also building the capacity of biomedical technicians to ensure sustainability.

Medical oxygen is now being integrated into our essential medicines framework, and we are developing a comprehensive national oxygen scale-up plan aligned with

WHA76.3. These efforts are supported through close collaboration with WHO and partners.

Despite progress, challenges remain, including energy reliability, financing, and maintenance systems. Addressing these requires sustained investment and global solidarity.

For The Gambia, access to medical oxygen is a matter of equity and justice—because access to oxygen is access to life.

The Gambia takes note of the report

I thank you.