



Republic of the Gambia
Ministry of Health
The Quadrangle
Banjul

SEVENTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER, GENEVA 2026

Agenda Item: D	The global health sector strategies on, respectively, HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections (resolution WHA75.20 (2022))
Documents	A79/26 and A79/26 Add.1
Requested action	Note the report
Time limit:	2 Minutes
Commission	B

**Honourable Chair, Director-General of the World Health Organization,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates**

The Gambia fully aligns with the global commitment to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030. Viral hepatitis remains a significant concern in our country, particularly hepatitis B, which continues to contribute to chronic liver disease, cirrhosis, and hepatocellular carcinoma. In response, hepatitis prevention, testing, and treatment have been prioritized within our national health strategy and universal health coverage agenda.

Notable progress has been made toward hepatitis elimination. The introduction and scale-up of the hepatitis B birth dose vaccination represent a critical milestone in preventing mother-to-child transmission. Access to screening and diagnostic services has expanded, especially among pregnant women and other high-risk populations. Through the National Hepatitis Control Programme, in collaboration with partners, monitoring and evaluation of hepatitis services were conducted across PMTCT facilities for the second and third quarters of 2025.

During the first three quarters of 2025, 37,140 pregnant women were screened for hepatitis B and C, with screening coverage among first antenatal care attendees reaching 98 percent. Of those screened, 3.9 percent tested positive for hepatitis B surface antigen, and 42.4 percent of eligible women were initiated on

tenofovir disoproxil fumarate prophylaxis. Hepatitis C prevalence remained below one percent. Timeliness of hepatitis B birth dose administration within 24 hours improved significantly, reaching 81.4 percent in 2025 compared to 35.5 percent in late 2024, although challenges remain for community and home deliveries.

With support from the Africa CDC, The Gambia is strengthening surveillance through enhanced sentinel sites, improved data management systems, and integration of hepatitis indicators into the national health information system to better track morbidity and mortality.

Despite these gains, challenges persist, including limited staff capacity, diagnostic gaps, and the high cost of treatment. We therefore call for sustained global solidarity, increased investment, and equitable access to affordable diagnostics and medicines. The Gambia remains firmly committed to evidence-based action and collaborative partnerships to ensure that no one is left behind in the fight against viral hepatitis.

I thank you all.