



Republic of the Gambia
Ministry of Health
The Quadrangle
Banjul

SEVENTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY (WHA79)

***Statement delivered by Honourable Minister Dr Ahmadou Lamin Samateh,
Head of Delegation, Geneva, 18-23 May 2025***

Item 3: Document A79/3

Theme of General Debate: Theme of the general discussion: “**Reshaping Global Health: A Shared Responsibility**”.

Time limit: **3mins**

**Honourable Chair,
Director-General,**
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of The Gambia, I extend our warmest congratulations to you, Honourable President, on your election to lead the Seventy-Ninth World Health Assembly. We assure you of Gambia’s full support and cooperation as you guide our deliberations under this critical agenda.

The Gambia fully aligns with the statement delivered by Mali on behalf of the Africa Group and its 47 Member States.

The Gambia wishes to express its deep appreciation to the Director-General of the World Health Organization for his exemplary leadership and the tangible progress achieved in 2025 in promoting, providing, and protecting health worldwide.

We commend WHO's sustained efforts in advancing health taxes, reducing tobacco use, and tackling air pollution, as well as strengthening the global health workforce. We further recognize progress in enhancing health data systems, including through digital technologies and artificial intelligence, and in expanding equitable access to essential medicines. We also commend the advancement of the traditional medicine strategy, intensified efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance, and continued progress against communicable diseases, including neglected tropical diseases, malaria, HIV, and tuberculosis. These achievements have been made despite the significant global challenges encountered in 2025.

In addition, The Gambia welcomes the progress made towards a global agreement on pandemics. We commend the constructive engagement of Member States in the ongoing negotiations on the Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing System (PABS), which will form an integral annex to the WHO Pandemic Agreement. Such frameworks are essential to ensuring equitable access to counter measures and strengthening global preparedness and response.

At the national level, under the visionary leadership of His Excellency President Adama Barrow, The Gambia continues to make meaningful strides in improving the health and well-being of its population. Our efforts are anchored in strengthening governance, leveraging technology, enhancing service delivery, expanding infrastructure, and investing in human resources.

Key achievements include the installation of satellite internet connectivity in health facilities to support the digitalization of birth registration and to improve data real-time reporting. We have accelerated the digitalization of health information systems, enabling better data-driven decision-making. To strengthen primary healthcare and outreach services, the Government has procured and distributed bicycles for community health workers, alongside 40 new fully equipped ambulances and six supervisory vehicles to enhance routine immunization, community surveillance, and patient referrals.

On infrastructure, notable progress includes the refurbishment of major health facilities, construction of new health centers, and the establishment of a National Drug and Food Testing Laboratory to improve quality assurance and regulatory functions. Furthermore, 42 State Enrolled Community Health Nurse Midwives have graduated, contributing to our skilled workforce, while the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) has been successfully rolled out as a key pillar towards universal health coverage.

Looking ahead to 2026, The Gambia remains committed to expanding access to quality healthcare for all. We will prioritize scaling up the NHIS to cover more facilities and populations, improving emergency response systems through additional ambulance procurement, and further strengthening health infrastructure through continued refurbishment and construction of health posts. We will also intensify the training and deployment of health personnel to enhance service quality and efficiency.

Excellencies,

The theme of this Assembly, **“Reshaping Global Health: A Shared Responsibility,”** is both timely and essential. In a world marked by economic uncertainties, climate challenges, and evolving health threats, no country can stand alone. We must collectively rethink how we design, finance, and deliver health systems. Shared responsibility calls for solidarity, equity, and mutual accountability. It demands strengthened partnerships, sustained investment, and inclusive frameworks that leave no one behind.

The Gambia stands ready to work with all Member States and partners to shape a resilient, equitable, and sustainable global health architecture for present and future generations.

I thank you.