



Statement of Ireland
79th World Health Assembly
Agenda Item 3
General Statement
Theme Reshaping Global Health: A Shared Responsibility

19 May 2026

Chair,
Director General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues,

Ireland aligns with the statement delivered by Cyprus on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Let me say at the outset, food and medicine should never be weaponised and Ireland stand with the comments of the DG this morning on Gaza and we call for humanitarian access immediately and at scale in Gaza.

We are facing challenging times for global health, for the WHO, and for the multilateral community more broadly.

Ireland remains a firm supporter of multilateralism, of global health, and of the World Health Organisation. Global health challenges such as health security,

antimicrobial resistance, the rising incidence of non-communicable diseases, health workforce and the impact of climate change on human health require us to work better together. Such fall-out does not respect national boundaries. While we are all affected, those that are socially and economically marginalised are the first to bear the burden.

We are deeply conscious of our interdependence and mutual reliance. We must work together for the collective health of our communities - nationally, regionally and globally.

Ireland applauds the WHO for the robust approach being taken to organisational change and re-prioritisation. These difficult cost-cutting measures will ensure the Organisation can continue to deliver effectively on its core functions. We encourage the WHO to bring the same energy, drive and leadership to bear into the process to reform the wider Global Health ecosystem including UN80.

We need look no further than the successful conclusion of the Pandemic Agreement for an example of what can be achieved through global collaboration. Multilateralism matters! Financial sustainability is crucial to an effective WHO. Ireland strongly supports the implementation of the ongoing reforms and calls for predictable and flexible funding for the WHO. We fully support the increase of 20% to Assessed Contributions from all Member States.

Ireland looks forward to the upcoming UN General Assembly. We hope to set a new vision for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases; the promotion of mental health and wellbeing towards 2030 and beyond, through a new and ambitious Political Declaration.

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to an immense actor in the field of global health, and one of our own, Dr. Mike Ryan. Ireland is immensely proud of the contribution Dr Ryan has made to global health and wellbeing during his time at the WHO. His passion, commitment and dedication has made a deep and lasting impact far beyond his native land. We wish Mike well in his next chapter. Finally, I want to reiterate Ireland's gratitude to you Dr Tedros for your leadership and commitment as you navigate these challenging times. You have our full and unwavering support.

Thank you.