

SEVENTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

GENEVA, 18 - 23 MAY 2026

Agenda item 12.5 - Primary Healthcare

Statement by Portugal – **2 minutos e 25 segundos**

Chair,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered under this agenda item on behalf of the European Union.

Portugal is grateful to the Director-General for the report and welcomes the continued focus on primary healthcare as the foundation of universal health coverage and of resilient, equitable, and person-centred health systems.

Primary healthcare brings health promotion, prevention, early diagnosis, continuity of care, community engagement, and essential public health functions closer to people and communities.

It is also the most effective way to reduce avoidable pressure on hospitals and specialized services.

Portugal's experience confirms this. The Portuguese National Health Service is built on universal access and strong primary healthcare.

Recent reforms have strengthened multidisciplinary teamwork, closer integration between primary care, hospitals, highly specialised care and community partners through Local Health Units.

Portugal highlights four priorities:

- 1) sustainable financing and financial protection;
- 2) investment in the health and care workforce;
- 3) reliable data to increase transparency and monitor access, quality, safety, and outcomes; and
- 4) an integrated care pathway approach that brings essential public health functions into person-centred care delivery.

We also support WHO's role in promoting country-led reforms, practical implementation tools, peer learning, and cooperation through the Universal Health Coverage Partnership and the Global Coalition on Primary Health Care.

Ahead of the 2027 United Nations High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage, we must move from renewed commitment to measurable implementation.

Primary healthcare is where universal health coverage becomes a reality for people, families, and communities.

Portugal remains committed to working with WHO and all Member States to strengthen primary healthcare and deliver health for all.

Thank you.

[265 words]