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Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly

Item 14.1 – WHO’s work in health emergencies

2’ speaking time – 2 minutos e 18 segundos

Chair,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Portugal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and is grateful to the Director-General for the reports.

At a time when health emergencies are becoming more frequent, complex and increasingly shaped by conflict, climate change and financial instability, strengthening preparedness and resilient health systems is a strategic global priority.

Portugal therefore commends WHO and its staff for their continued operational leadership in some of the world’s most difficult humanitarian settings, often under severe financial constraints and in contexts where healthcare is directly affected by insecurity.

The reports remind us of an essential lesson: preparedness cannot begin when a crisis is already unfolding.



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It depends on strong surveillance systems, trusted public institutions, resilient primary healthcare and sustained investment in the health workforce.

Portugal particularly welcomes WHO's work on collaborative surveillance, genomic monitoring and epidemic intelligence, including the use of digital tools and artificial intelligence to strengthen early detection and response capacities.

We also acknowledge WHO's rapid coordination and technical support in response to the recent Hantavirus outbreak, demonstrating the importance of timely international cooperation and transparent information sharing.

Preparedness also requires sustainable and predictable financing, continued support for essential health services, including vaccination, maternal health and mental health, and access to essential medicines and diagnostics, remains critical to protect vulnerable populations, particularly in humanitarian settings.

Portugal remains strongly committed to a multilateral approach to health emergencies, grounded in cooperation, trust and equity. A safer world depends not only on responding faster to crises, but on building stronger systems before crises occur.

Thank you.

260 words