



South Africa Intervention

Agenda Item 12.4: Universal Health Coverage Sub-item: Draft global strategy for integrated emergency, critical and operative care, 2026–2035

Chairperson,

1. South Africa welcomes document A79/5 and formally supports the adoption of the Global Strategy for Integrated Emergency, Critical, and Operative Care (2026–2035). We appreciate the Executive Board's recommendation in decision EB158(4) to elevate this integrated approach.
2. For South Africa, **"Universal Health Coverage"** must ensure that emergency and operative services are not viewed as high-cost luxuries but as essential components of the right to health. This strategy provides a vital roadmap for integrating these services into the Primary Health Care (PHC) model, ensuring that life-saving interventions are available at the first point of contact.
3. The implementation of our National Health Insurance is designed to eliminate the fragmentation that historically marginalized emergency and surgical care. By adopting this global strategy, we aim to standardize care pathways across our districts, ensuring that a patient in a rural clinic has the same access to timely critical and operative care as one in a metropolitan centre.
4. We support the strategy's focus on the health workforce. South Africa is committed to training multi-disciplinary teams—including mid-level workers—to provide critical care. This aligns with our domestic focus on expanding the clinical associate and emergency medical services cadres to support our integrated service delivery model.
5. We note the strategy's call for improved data systems. South Africa is leveraging a Digital Backbone to track outcomes in emergency and operative care, ensuring that our resource allocation is evidence-based and that we are addressing the "neglected" burden of surgical disease.
6. Chairperson, South Africa reaffirms that the "Universal Health Coverage" requires investing in the systems that save lives in the "golden hour." We look forward to

working with the Secretariat to domesticate this strategy, ensuring it is backed by sustainable domestic financing and the principles of social solidarity.

Thank you.