

79th SESSION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

18 – 23 May 2026

Statement by Zimbabwe on Agenda Item 20 and 20.1

Reform of the global health architecture and the UN80 Initiative

Mr President

Zimbabwe is honoured to present this statement on behalf of the 47 Member States of the WHO Africa Region.

We thank the Director General and the Secretariat for developing a proposal for a WHO-hosted joint process to transform the Global Health Architecture (GHA).

The reform agenda is unfolding amid a changed landscape for financing, official development assistance and wider UN reforms.

There is need to sustain recent gains accomplished in the health domain. It is our hope that pressures, together with UN-wide reforms under the UN80 Initiative, the global health architecture, even if fragmented had positive collective gains over the years and current reform measures

must not weaken the delivery of essential health functions, particularly in low-resource settings.

The Africa region takes note of the proposed shift towards a simplified Task Force model, and supports, in principle, a flexible and Member State-led governance structure to guide the Joint Process.

The Africa Region reiterate the need to align the Joint Process with African political priorities and frameworks, including decisions of the African Union Heads of States, the Lusaka Agenda, the Accra Reset, and the African High-level Ministerial Committee on Global Health Architecture Reform. Such alignment is essential to reinforce coherence, avoid duplication, and ensure that the reform process strengthens Member State and regional ownership. We also wish to highlight the need to safeguard the primary role of Member States in decision making and the Global process to match the current momentum in the Africa region with the highest-level political engagement.

Chair, it is also important to have clarity on the intended outcomes of the joint process moving forward.

The Africa Region reiterates the importance of a strong and well-resourced World Health Organization at the centre of a more coherent and effective global health architecture, serving as the primary normative and coordinating authority.

The region calls for the provision of focused support to countries most affected by financing shocks including WHO Africa Member States with a view to rationalizing international health financing and strengthening regional coordination capacities.

The Africa region also calls for the mobilization of resources to maintain WHO capacity to discharge its mandate efficiently including pairing digital reforms with strong governance, change management and capacity-building strategies to ensure adoption, accountability and real UN80 impact at the country level.

The Africa Region remains committed to a constructive and Member State-driven process that delivers a more equitable, coherent and country-led Global Health Architecture.

I thank you.