148. Executive Board - Agenda Item 5

Statement of Austria

Thank you Chair, Dear Colleagues,

• Let me start with the notion:

  • **Austria welcomes** the decision of the new US administration to re-join his full power of the multilateral work of the World Health Organization. This is good news for all of us who regard **multilateralism as an indispensable strength** and not a weakness in our global work.

• Let me also say that the worldwide pandemic has shown how fragile and vulnerable our social structures in general are and the health care system in particular.

• This is also the case for a high-income country like I am representing here.

• But, we have also witnessed that a well-functioning health care system – based on solidarity and mutual support – is a fundamental basis for dealing with such an extraordinary situation.

• **Patient Safety** is one of the most important principles for every health care system, and even though the Covid-19 crisis has pushed us to our limits, we should use this crisis and all its lessons as an **opportunity for further development and improvement in the context of patient safety.**
• As examples for important areas for intervention, we would like to underline initiatives stressing the importance of vaccinations especially Covid-19 vaccinations for health-care workers, medication safety, avoidance of health-care associated infections and antimicrobial resistance and the strengthening of health literacy of patients.

• WHO has provided guidance for patient safety solutions for a long time and Austria is proud to be a part of the WHO patient safety community. We are convinced that this crisis as well as future challenges can only be dealt with by international and cross-sectoral cooperation. We are convinced that the Global Action Plan has the potential of profoundly strengthening patient safety worldwide.

• Therefore, Austria fully supports the adoption of the draft decision on the Global Action Plan including the mandate to the WHO Director-General to submit regular implementation reports.

• Thank you!