Statement by Government of Bangladesh

148th Session of WHO Executive Board
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Item 7: Expanding access to effective treatments for cancer and rare and orphan diseases, including medicines, vaccines, medical devices, diagnostics, assistive products, cell- and gene-based therapies and other health technologies; and improving the transparency of markets for medicines, vaccines, and other health products.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

02. We thank the secretariat for sharing the report.

03. We appreciate that the problems and challenges faced by the low- and middle-income countries to get the treatment for cancer and other rare and orphan diseases are elaborately presented in the report. Due to inadequate investment in research and development, lack of effective policies for selecting health products, insufficient financing and expenditure management, weak regulatory capacity, poor infrastructure and short supply of resources, the low- and middle-income countries cannot afford the necessary treatment.

Mr. Chair,

04. Equitable access to Safe, effective, quality-assured and affordable vaccines, medicines, medical devices is a global priority for achieving the SDGs, in particular target 3.8. It is a matter of concern that there are no treatments for many rare
diseases. Even if a treatment exists, the high prices of these treatments, products and patent barriers limit access only to a few high-income countries. In addition, some rare diseases which are not common in developed countries but in developing countries, are also known as rare diseases. However, the treatment and vaccination of this kind of rare diseases are ignored by the developed countries. This is regrettable.

05. The Government of Bangladesh attaches high importance to have access to medicines, vaccines, medical devices and medical equipment at affordable cost. We recognize the importance of fair pricing and domestic investment in universal coverage schemes. Bangladesh is meeting 98% of its demand of medical products by local production, but almost all are generic. However, treatment of cancer and other rare diseases is still limited in our country.

Mr. Chair,

06. We echo with the recommendations mentioned in the report and wish to make six points:

   First, we urge WHO and other international partners to extend research, innovation, training and development facility for the management and prevention of non-communicable diseases such as cancer, diabetes and other rare and orphan diseases.

   Second, we would like to emphasize the importance of good governance, transparency, and accountability throughout the supply chain for medical products to improve efficiency in quantification and forecasting and decrease the risks in the supply chain which may contribute to local, regional or global shortages.
Third, we request WHO to support the Member States in strengthening the capacity of Member States to regulate medical devices, in vitro diagnostics, and assistive products.

Fourth, WHO should encourage Member States for local production of medicines, vaccines, medical devices, and medical equipment.

Fifth, fair and affordable pricing must be ensured especially for low- and middle-income countries to get effective treatments for cancer and rare and orphan diseases.

Finally, we request WHO to provide assistance, education, training and necessary equipment for rehabilitation and palliative care for patients suffering from cancer and rare diseases.

I thank you, Chair.