Agenda 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**

**Document EB148/9**

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:**

The Director-General will submit a report on progress that includes access to health products for rare and orphan diseases. The Board will be invited to note the progress made and to provide further guidance on optimizing access to cell- and gene-based therapeutics and other health products for rare and orphan diseases.

**PHILIPPINE INTERVENTION:**

Thank you, Moderator, Honorable Chair, esteemed delegates,

The Philippines would like to highlight the importance of situating the challenges of providing access to high-cost treatments in the context of our goal to achieve Universal Health Coverage.

The country’s UHC Act supports the implementation of the National Cancer Control Act and the Rare Diseases Act through mechanisms such as health technology assessment (HTA), pooled purchasing and price negotiation.

While fairness and equity are important principles in our UHC framework, there are important barriers which remain for patients afflicted with diseases such as cancer and orphan disorders. These include (1) inadequate financing, (2) the steep prices of new treatments, (3) the lack of regulatory and HTA capacity particularly for medical devices and cell- and gene-based therapies and (4) the need for long-term and complex specialty care for these conditions.

We welcome the WHO initiatives to strengthen the capacity of Member States to address the challenges posed by cancer, orphan diseases and other NCDs as contained in the report.

We also express our support to WHO initiatives to improve the transparency of markets especially the pricing of high-cost medicines. The WHO Report on cancer drug pricing helped us revisit our policies which led to recent mandatory price caps imposed across 120 high-cost medicines, including biologics and other treatments for cancer.

The Philippines also implements drug price transparency measures as mandated by our country laws. Public procurement and consumer prices of essential medicines are available online to address information asymmetry. We also participate in WHO price information sharing initiatives such as PIEMEDS and also aim to build on this platform to expand its scope to other high-cost medicines and medical devices of common interest in the ASEAN Region.

Thank you