Agenda item 9:
Global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation and intellectual property
Document EB148/10

PROPOSED ACTIONS:
The Director-General will submit a report on progress made in implementing the decision, including an update on the informal consultations referred to in paragraphs (2) and (3) of the decision. The Board will be invited to note the report.

PHILIPPINE INTERVENTION:

The Philippines supports the recommendations of the Global Strategy and Plan of Action to prioritize research and development, build innovation capacity, promote technology transfer and strengthen country capacity in applying TRIPS flexibilities. They remain more relevant today as the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Being a novel disease, the greatest challenge faced by the Philippines has been to provide immediate access to critical medical supplies for COVID-19. While TRIPS flexibilities are ingrained in our patent laws and the Cheaper Medicines Act, they are not enough to address the current public health emergency. When COVID-19 hit our country, we faced critical shortages of PPEs and hospital equipment for which there is no robust capacity for local manufacturing. We were also faced with the challenge of a constrained global supply – the same barrier we are now facing in securing COVID-19 vaccines for our population.

The lesson of COVID-19 is that we need to approach access with a lens towards equity fostering global cooperation to build a better system that leaves no country behind. We therefore laud the WHO for rethinking the innovation strategy with initiatives like the Solidarity Trial and the COVAX facility to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 drugs and vaccines even for low- and middle-income countries. The Philippines is a participant in both initiatives.

Lastly, we fully support the adoption of the strategic directions set forth in the global plan. We recognize that the Plan plays a pivotal role not only in responding to the current COVID-19 pandemic but also in future initiatives of Member States on innovation and research and development towards the achievement of other public health goals.

Thank you, Chair.