Portugal

World Health Organization
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Item 14.1 Public health emergencies: preparedness and response; COVID-19 response
Geneva, 18th/19th January 2021

Mr. Chair,
Director General,
Excellences,

Portugal aligns itself with the statement previously made on behalf of the EU countries. We underline the importance of strengthening preparedness mechanisms and essential public health services, to boost readiness in the face of health emergencies. These emergencies are bound to happen more often, and we highlight the importance of the - preparedness, response and recover - cycle.

The current pandemic highlighted the need to build resilient health systems, providing a competent response to all spectrum of diseases while avoiding disproportional negative impacts in individuals and populations, ensuring that equity, gender balance and mental health outcomes are taken into consideration.

Portugal is committed to seize this window of opportunity and move towards a global sustainable development approach, in line with the SDGs and with the guidance of WHO, assuring that no one is left behind, including migrants, conflict zones and refugee camps.

Mr. Chair,
The IHR, transparency and communication channels should serve as the basis and means to respond to health emergencies. We look forward to regular, participated and in-depth updates on the progress of the Universal Health and Preparedness Review implementation.
The rule "hope for the best and prepare for the worst" - an adage usually attributed to Portuguese author Fernando Pessoa, sums up our collective intentions for the future. The year 2021 is still full of challenges to counter this pandemic, and we must redouble our efforts and support for solidarity and multilateral action, coordinated by the WHO.

Thank you

[247 words]