WHO Executive Board 148th Session
Statement by C on Oral Health under Agenda Item 6.

Considering the Director General’s report on “Achieving better oral health as part of the universal health coverage and non-communicable disease agendas towards 2030 (EB148/8)”, The resolution initiated by Sri Lanka on oral health is proposed to the Executive Board through its co-sponsoring EB member countries.

Sri Lanka wishes to express its appreciation for the strong support and cooperation received for this Resolution. Four rounds of consultations were held and we wish to thank delegations for their active participation and constructive comments which resulted in an unprecedented consensus. In particular, we wish to thank the co-sponsors of the resolution Bangladesh, Bhutan, Botswana, Eswatini, the EU, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Peru and Thailand.

There is an urgent need for international political commitment to the integration of oral health into primary health care as part of UHC benefit packages and we believe this Resolution is an important cornerstone in action towards achieving good oral health for all.

Oral diseases pose a significant challenge to global public health as almost half of the world population is suffering from a poor oral condition, which has a direct effect on general health and wellbeing.

Further, the economic effects of oral diseases are alarming, especially since oral diseases are mostly preventable. In fact, many oral diseases share the same risk factors as other non-communicable diseases such as poor hygiene, high sugar intake, tobacco use and the harmful use of alcohol. Oral cancers are also widespread in many regions of the world. Oral health services have faced serious disruption because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore a comprehensive and integrated Global Strategy on oral health as part of the non-communicable diseases and universal health coverage agendas is essential.
We are hopeful that this initiative by Sri Lanka, will translate into global action for public oral health with clear measurable targets, to be achieved by 2030.

For this reason we look forward to the World Health Assembly adopting this Resolution in May, and give the WHO a clear mandate to work on this important issue.

(Duration: 2 minutes)