Thank you Chairperson. Zambia aligns the statement to that of Burkina Faso delivered on behalf of the Africa Region, and commends WHO and all stakeholders on the strides made thus far towards the eradication of polio; and the efforts made by Member States in our Region for attainment of certification of the Africa Region as free from wild poliovirus.

Chairperson, the continued outbreaks of polio due to circulating vaccine derived poliovirus type 2, twenty-one years after the eradication of the wild type is, however, unacceptable and a reminder of the inequalities that continue to exist in our world. When Zambia last detected a case in 2019, in a patient with no history of vaccination with OPV, it raised alarm as to the presence of cVDPV2 in the environment.

Chairperson, it is a daunting task to win people’s trust when they learn that the cause of the disease is the best choice we have at its prevention, and impact negatively the fight against the ever increasing vaccine hesitancy.

While we acknowledge the Global Polio Eradication Initiative Strategy for Control of cVDPV2, 2020-2021, we would be pleased to know to what extent the strategy has been implemented, and how widely available has been the novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2), which has demonstrated a lower risk of mutating and causing paralysis.

We believe lessons have been learnt from the switch, and that in future adequate alternatives would be put in place, particularly for countries like ours.

I thank you