

**National Statement of India
for the World Health Assembly Special Session
29 November to 1 December 2021**

Madam Chair, Director General, Dr. Tedros, Excellencies and Delegates

Good afternoon to you all!

Chair,

I thank you for giving me the floor. India welcomes the report of the Working Group on Strengthening WHO Preparedness and Response to Health Emergencies and places on record our appreciation for the work of the Bureau. Covid-19 pandemic continues to pose a grave threat to global health and economy. We, therefore, urge the Working Group to continue its deliberations, aimed at implementation of other key recommendations made by the three mechanisms, including amendments to IHR.

2. India welcomes the consensus reached on the draft resolution, containing the decision to establish an inter-governmental negotiating body and looks forward to working together with member States in order to achieve its goals.

3. The next task before us is to carefully delineate draft elements of the future instrument, taking into account various proposals made by member States. We should prepare an exhaustive compilation of various elements proposed by member States, which would provide the negotiators a basis to build consensus. In doing so, we should also take into account the Final Report of the Working Group. India assures of its constructive engagement in preparation of the elements and during the negotiation of the instrument.

4. India believes that equity is of critical importance for global health and we must keep equity at the core of the new instrument. We should also address the barriers to development and distribution of medical countermeasures, including aspects related to intellectual property, technology transfer and scaling up of local and regional manufacturing capacities during emergencies.

5. India believes that public health infrastructure in developing countries is underdeveloped and requires international support. Our efforts should, therefore, focus on provision of technical and financial support for building capacities of the member States.

6. We also believe that the future instrument should include elements for prevention and management of zoonotic risks as part of a One Health approach. It should strengthen international legal framework for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

Chair,

7. While engaging in deliberations and negotiations on a new instrument for preventing a future pandemic, we should continue to accord a high priority to implementation of other key recommendations, including WHO reforms. In this regard,

we highly commend the initiatives, taken by WHO, under leadership of Dr. Tedros, towards implementing some of the key recommendations.

8. To conclude, I reiterate India's strong commitment to the welfare of the entire humanity, which is reflected in our continued contribution to the global action against Covid pandemics through supply of medical counter measures and vaccines to over 150 countries. We have also made available our COWIN Platform for smooth organization of vaccination to other countries.
