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Remarks by Mr R.K Jain on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Director- General, Regional Director, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues,

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) comprises 191 National Societies and 16 million volunteers, forming a network with capacities to prevent, prepare for and respond to health emergencies. Our member National Societies are mandated by State Parties to the Geneva Conventions to assist governments in disaster preparedness and response, including public health crises. Our commitment to public health emergencies has been unwavering, collaborating with governments, partners, and communities throughout crises such as Ebola, Zika, SARS, dengue, measles, COVID-19 and mpox. Recognizing that public health emergencies will remain a constant challenge; it is critical that we enhance our preparedness efforts. The IFRC is committed to offering its expertise, guidance and support to governments, advocating and supporting the development of global and local agreements that are robust and transformative in practice. COVID-19 taught us hard lessons. Critical gaps in global, regional, and national cooperation and resource mobilization cost lives, particularly in vulnerable communities. Moving forward, we must focus on strengthening local capacities and advocate for innovative solutions that are contextually relevant, affordable, and accessible to those in need. Engaging communities and local actors in health emergency preparedness response and recovery is essential. This includes securing adequate financing and fostering an environment that encourages their active participation throughout. Further, urgent action must be taken to strengthen law and policy for public health emergencies. Without a strong legal base, preparedness and response activities can be uncoordinated and ineffective, often delaying urgent help to the people that need it most. Recognizing climate change as a significant trigger in public health emergencies, our investments in prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery must adopt a multidimensional approach that considers these interconnections. By doing so, we can enhance resilience and ensure a more effective response to health crises. Excellencies, distinguished representatives, dear colleagues, together, we have the opportunity to build more resilient and responsive health systems that serves all communities effectively and equally. Let us seize this opportunity collectively. Thank you.