Esteemed Mrs. Socorro Escalante, Representative of WHO,

UN Coordinator Mr. Tapan Mishra,

Diplomatic Corps in Ulaanbaatar City,

Members of Parliament and Cabinet,

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to extend to you all my sincere greetings and felicitations on the World Health Day. The global community has been celebrating the 7th day of April every year as a tradition. This year the 7th of April also marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the World Health Organization.

As of today, 194 countries of the world had joined this organization since it was established in 1948. During this time the WHO has been successfully spearheading global initiatives to reduce preventable maternal and child diseases and deaths, and to mitigate the negative impact of social and economic determinants of health and other factors contributing to burden of communicable and noncommunicable diseases and undermining quality of life.

For instance, the World Health Organization is leading efforts of the UN agencies in health sector as evidenced by such milestones as adoption of the Framework Agreement on Tobacco Control, an international treaty enforceable as a national legislation, and the World Health Regulations.
We see today that health issues are beyond a mandate of one sector or one agency as evidenced by the UN Security Council discussions on HIV/AIDS and the World Economic Forum sessions on vaccines, obesity and tobacco control. In fact, health has become one of the priorities of international cooperation.

Mongolia became a member of the WHO in 1962 and last year in 2022 we jointly celebrated the 60th anniversary of our membership. I would like to emphasize the close cooperation we enjoyed during this time between the Government of Mongolia and WHO in protecting Mongolians’ health and designing optimal health policies through timely policy and technical recommendations on the government activities.

Significant improvements were made in health indicators and overall quality of life of Mongolians as a result of our close cooperation and partnership. Let me share a few statistics. For instance, in 1962 our population was 1.0 million whereas today we have reached 3.4 million. If average life expectancy of Mongolians was 65.5 years in 1965, for the last 56 years the average life expectancy increased by 5.2 years reaching 70.7 years.

During this time we saw drastic changes in the main indicators of the health system, that define the country’s development, such as maternal mortality rate which was reduced by 6.6 times, and infant mortality rate, which was reduced by 5.6 times.

In terms of communicable diseases, our country in 1961 suffered from measles outbreak that infected more than 12 thousand children. In contrast, in 2022 we didn’t have a single case of measles.

I would like to say that all these are success and achievements of our joint efforts and shared history.

Mongolian Government is committed to the universal health coverage based on the principle of “leaving no one behind” as urged by WHO. For this purpose, we are working to improve our legal framework and provide favourable environment to promote health. In particular, we are working to ensure universal health coverage through strengthening primary healthcare system, optimizing financing and increasing investment.

As an effort to achieve the abovementioned goal, the Ministry of Health is currently developing a new “Law on Public Health Services”, which is the first of its kind in Mongolia. Our priority is to implement health education programs for public and create other conducive environment so that the focus of the health system shifts from “treating sick people” to “keeping healthy people healthy and preventing chronic conditions”. Although sectoral legislations have defined “public health as priority of the health sector”, the funds mostly go to finance hospital centered care. Therefore, through the legal reforms we aim to expand public health services in order to create a system that truly protects health and impacts public behavior and lifestyle.

Finally, on behalf of the Mongolian Government and in my own name I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the WHO and other international partners for successful leadership and support provided to the global response against COVID-19 pandemic that started back in 2020.

Happy World Health Day to all of you and thank you for being with us for the Health for All.