



Statement by the Deputy Secretary General of the Turkic Council Dr. Ömer Kocaman at the 71st Session of the World Health Organization Regional Committee for Europe

14 September 2021

Dear President,
Director-General,
Regional-Director,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to express my gratitude to the Regional Director of WHO Europe, Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge for inviting the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States to the 71st session of the Regional Committee for Europe.

Turkic Council, being a comprehensive regional cooperation organization for our Member States - Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan, as well as observer state Hungary, attends this Committee Meeting for the second time.

Since the beginning of the pandemic crisis, we are showing utmost efforts to contribute to the fight against COVID-19 and its negative effects.

Turkic Council became the first international organization which held the Extraordinary Video Summit at the level of Heads of State on the fight against COVID-19 pandemic and later the Meetings of the Ministers of Health to implement instructions of the Heads of States.

As a result of those meetings, we have established a permanent “Health Coordination Committee”, a “Supply Chain Group” to provide each other with medicine and medical equipment and a “Health Scientific Group” to exchanging experience among medical professionals.

Subsequently, in the framework of the Health Scientific Group we held the face-to-face Vaccine Workshop organized by the Ministry of Health of Turkey in 2020 and many online meetings to update each other and share treatment protocols.

Dear participants,

As you can realize the Heads of Member States also put a special emphasis for close cooperation with WHO and therefore, we have been in close contact with organization since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Based on this instruction, the Secretary General and the WHO Regional Director, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 11 September 2020 with the aim of establishing the legal basis for future engagements.

For implementing the aforementioned MOU, the Secretariat and WHO Istanbul Office together with the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Turkey are preparing a 3-phase project called “Strengthening Emergency Medical Care Systems in the Member States of the Turkic Council” that will take place in Azerbaijan and later in other member countries.

We strongly support the WHO European Regional Office to unite efforts of regional multilateral institutions and mechanisms around health as one of the key objectives of the European Programme of Work for 2020–2025.

As the representative of the Turkic Council, Prof. Dr. Emine Alp Meşe, in her capacity as the Chair of the Health Scientific Group of the Turkic Council also contributed to the work of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development.

Additionally, together with WHO Europe we will finalize the draft Action Plan for the implementation of the MOU and planning to organize online training programs for health professionals, to accelerate implementation of the International Health Regulation (2005), to improve high vaccination coverage, conduct capacity building for data and health information systems.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm that, Turkic Council is ready to coordinate and support all the efforts not only in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic but also in the post-pandemic period in the other areas of the health sector.

I believe, we will leave these challenging days behind by establishing solid cooperation among all the countries.

Thank you for your attention and I wish you success in your deliberations.