

72nd Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe
Statement of the Minister of Health of the Slovak Republic
Item 2 – Discussion on the addresses by the Director-General and the Regional Director

Chair,
Director General,
Regional Director,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement of the Czech Republic made on behalf of the EU and its Member States on this agenda item.

The past two years cannot be defined otherwise than turbulent. In one aspect, the international community has been struck by public health emergencies and in another aspect, earlier this year and since, we have been facing a full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. Such hostile action together with other actions in violation of international law stretching to different world regions are condemnable in the strongest possible terms.

On a more positive note, I am convinced that those past two years and the public health challenges we have encountered, will also serve in a long run, as drivers for important changes.

It is without any doubt that these circumstances require strong and mandated WHO as well as efficient health strategies elaborated at the global and regional level and close international cooperation with the central role of the Member States. On top of all this, we need a functional multilateralism which can only be sustained by a transparent and inclusive approaches. Slovakia with its initiative on more transparent candidature processes within the WHO bodies is also a keen supporter of enhancing the open governance in the WHO European region.

Moreover, Slovakia welcomes the steps aiming at sustainable WHO financing and underlines the importance of such reform in a way that it also contributes to improving the health at national levels by strengthening and interconnecting the national health actors and policies with global initiatives, scientific networks and expertise.

Apart from that, the most recent experience with cross-regional threats have shown us the significance of well-tailored measures and international coordination, which is why we are convinced that investing into the preparedness and response phase in terms of public health emergencies as well as to building resilient health systems greatly pays off.

In addition, we were pleased to see HIV, AIDS, Tuberculosis and Disabilities high on the agenda of this years' Regional Committee, as those are highly relevant for Slovakia, given an influx of the Ukrainian people who were forced to leave the country. In this respect, no less importance should be assigned to the mental health and psychosocial support matters, which is why I am particularly glad that doctor Tedros expressed his support on this during his June visit to Slovakia.

Lastly, I am convinced that it is the immediate deepening of mutual engagement which could divert us from failing in an expensive way.

I thank you.