



Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN **Geneva**

H.E. Dr. Zafar Mirza, Minister of State, NHSRC

73rd Session of the World Health Assembly (virtual)
(Monday, 18 May, 2020)

Mr. President,
Dr Tedros, Director General, WHO
Honorable Ministers,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

COVID-19 represents an unprecedented and defining health crisis of our time.

Pakistan agrees with the calls for coordinated, collective and sustained actions, among countries and institutions to suppress and mitigate this pandemic.

It is clear that no country alone can protect itself from this contagion. Solidarity and unity is therefore vital to tackle morbidity and mortality, to ease burden on the health systems, and support national and global economies.

Pakistan endorses the statement delivered by the Chinese delegation on the issue of Taiwan. Pakistan fully supports China's efforts to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity. In line with iterations of General Committee, year after year, Pakistan's position is that there is only One-China and Taiwan being its integral part has no right whatsoever to claim the membership of WHO.

This session of the World Health Assembly is significant in many ways. As the premier global health parliament, it must lend its full support to the on-going preparedness and response plans and strategies. The Assembly

must support growing calls for development and production of COVID-related diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines that are affordable, equitable and accessible to all. My Prime Minister Imran Khan has already given this call.

Pakistan has reported significantly lower numbers than the initial international projections, especially considering that Pakistan is the 5th most populous developing country in the world. Despite these numbers, we are not complacent and are taking every possible step to combat this pandemic.

We are implementing a National Action Plan for COVID-19 with a whole of government approach including at the highest level, multi-sectoral coordination at federal, provincial and local levels. Through this plan the overarching strategy of Trace, Test and Quarantine is being pursued and operationalized.

We are training the frontline health care workers, sustaining the momentum of public awareness messages, making available critical medical supplies to healthcare professionals and workers.

Some of the lessons learned from the outbreak of this pandemic include the need for enhanced investments in national and global pandemic preparedness, detection and response mechanisms; strengthening of core capacities under IHR & improved pandemic response financing mechanisms. WHO and Member States must take this opportunity to start imagining the future of healthcare. Current political global attention must translate into strengthened essential public health functions. More than ever before world needs PHC based UHC.

The world is bearing the fallout of this pandemic in so many different ways including the spread of other disease as those have remained relatively unattended.

At the end I want to emphasize the need for collective action for voiceless poor suffering through these tough times.

Thank you very much Madam President
