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**World Health Organization**  
**EB 144 – January 2019**

**5.5 Primary Health Care**

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Thank you Chair.

We would like to thank the Director General and the secretariat for the preparatory report for this item.

While scientific and technological progresses are essential in promoting global health, the importance of Primary Health Care remains relevant.

In recent decades, countries across different regions are faced with the increasing burden of noncommunicable diseases. [As noted in the report, "across all countries, the proportion of disability-adjusted life years lost to noncommunicable diseases grew from 47% to 60% between 2000 and 2016".] This trend, which calls for reconsideration of how to tackle this rising challenge, only reaffirms the importance of primary health care and especially its key part in supporting health systems' adaptability.

Accessible, high quality and safe primary health care is the backbone of strong, sustainable and effective health systems. And strong health systems are a necessary foundation to achieving Universal Health Coverage.

We positively note the most recent development on the way to achieving Primary Health Care: the **Global Conference on Primary Health Care**, organized by WHO, UNICEF and the Government of Kazakhstan. We commend Kazakhstan for hosting this event, and for taking a leading role in the process that led to the Declaration of Astana. We welcome the declaration and see it an important step towards achieving Universal Health Coverage.

We look forward to WHO increased involvement in supporting Member States achieving the vision of the Astana Declaration, and look forward to the updated version of the "Operational Framework for Primary health care: transforming vision into action", this spring.

We thank you Chair.