

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to address this side event of the World Health Assembly on the important theme of “*Strengthening Investment in Health Security through the Universal Health Preparedness Review.*”

On behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka, I wish to reaffirm our strong commitment to global health security, resilient health systems, and multilateral cooperation. The experiences of recent years, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, reminded us that no country is fully protected unless every country is prepared. Preparedness is not a luxury; it is an essential investment for safeguarding lives, economies, and national development.

For countries like Sri Lanka, investing in preparedness is especially important because we face multiple and overlapping risks from infectious disease outbreaks and climate-related disasters to economic disruptions that can affect health systems and vulnerable populations. While these challenges are significant, they also reinforce the importance of collective action and international solidarity.

It is in this context that Sri Lanka is preparing to undertake the *Universal Health Preparedness Review*, in 2026. We view this not merely as an assessment exercise, but as a strategic opportunity to strengthen our national preparedness architecture and reinforce investment in health security.

Excellencies,

Preparedness must not begin when a crisis emerges. It must be built steadily, collectively, and sustainably through highest level political commitment and long-term investment.

The UHPR offers a unique platform for peer learning, transparency, and accountability among Member States. Importantly, it promotes a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to preparedness.

One of the greatest values of the UHPR lies in its ability to support evidence-based investment. Too often, preparedness financing declines once a crisis subsides. The UHPR helps countries

define clear priorities and investment needs, enabling governments and partners to allocate resources more strategically and sustainably.

The review process will also help strengthen multisectoral collaboration. Importantly, the UHPR contributes to building trust between governments and citizens, and trust among countries. Transparent peer review demonstrates commitment, encourages accountability, and fosters international cooperation at a time when global solidarity is more important than ever.

Investment in health security should not be seen as a cost. It is an investment in stability, resilience, and sustainable development. Every investment made in preparedness today helps protect lives, safeguard economies, and strengthen confidence for the future.

As Sri Lanka prepares for the UHPR in 2026, we look forward to working closely with the World Health Organization, Member States, and partners to advance this important agenda. Let us continue to strengthen preparedness through partnership, shared learning, and sustained investment, so that future generations inherit a safer, healthier, and more resilient world.

Thank you.