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The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Office of the Prime Minister

Statement by the Government of Ethiopia

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As part of our broader goals to improve the health and wellbeing of our people, ensure health security and fulfill our obligations under the 2005 International Health Regulation (IHR), Ethiopia has consistently demonstrated its commitment to strengthen public health and animal health systems. We have made massive investments in scaling up our health infrastructure including training and deployment of health workers. We have also built a strong national laboratory capacity and have improved our regional laboratories infrastructure.

We are working to establish robust surveillance systems for critical diseases in the human and animal health sectors. Emphasis has been on improving health information systems in the country. Ethiopia has also made good progress year-on year in term of timeliness and completeness of reportable diseases. We have ensured that the core IHR requirements are reflected in relevant national laws. Ethiopia has also prioritized multi-sectoral collaboration to ensure adequate preparedness of the country to prevent, detect, and respond to disease outbreaks. Acute Watery Diarrheal diseases including Cholera is of course included in this effort.

Our commitment to continue improving the country's capacity to meet IHR core competencies is firm and unshakable. As a recent example of our commitment, our Ministry of Health volunteered to be evaluated externally and the joint external evaluation report is a matter of public record.¹ This report found that Ethiopia has satisfactory or above satisfactory performance in most of the IHR core competencies.

Since the assessment in 2016, we have taken steps to address the areas of improvement identified during the evaluation. As part of this, we have created a multi-sectoral coordination council led by the Deputy Prime Minister. This mechanism has helped ensure the prompt response to the severe drought Ethiopia has faced since 2015.

As Minister of Health, H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, systematically transformed our health system to improve public health and strengthen our response to outbreaks. Ethiopia has since its adoption in 2007 adhered to the IHR and remains committed to fulfill its obligations under IHR.

Under Dr. Tedros' leadership, Ethiopia has also made tremendous progress in reducing child mortality by two-thirds. And despite hosting the largest number of refugees in Africa, Ethiopia has a lower rate of childhood deaths from diarrheal diseases than Africa as a whole.

We know that we have much more to do improving the health and well-being of our citizens. But we are proud of how far Ethiopia has come and are confident that we will continue to improve our health systems and our ability to respond effectively to disease outbreaks in our country.

¹ <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/254276/1/WHO-HSE-GCR-2016.24-eng.pdf>