62nd Health Ministers Conference
Closing speech
Minister of Health and Quality of Life

Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegation
Director-General of ECSA
Distinguished Delegates
Staff of ECSA and of my Ministry
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have now come to the end of this Health Ministers Conference.

2000 – 2015 – 15 years – a drop in time but what a quantum leap in achievement. The MDGs have made the world better, less poor, healthier and more prosperous. But there are new challenges which have emerged. Global warming, migrants, terrorism, piracy are now on the theme of all news programmes. The SDGs are a follow up on the MDGs and the hope is that the next 15 years will witness a momentous and positive transformation for mankind at large. Let us really make poverty and misery history.
At present, we say that while all patients must be entitled to health services and treatment, let us hope that by the end of the SDGs, we will be able to confidently tell all patients that they will get all services and treatment at all level.

Looking back on the years since the new millennium began when we challenged ourselves as a global community to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, we can see that we have made progress. It is time now to move on to the SDGs with more goals and wider targets.

The issues that we have discussed and advanced this week, issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals, Universal Health Coverage and Health Financing, non-communicable diseases and trauma, surveillance and control of communicable diseases, Human Resources for Health and Global Health Diplomacy are critical to the health and well-being of the people of the member states of the ECSA Health Community.

Distinguished participants,

Together with the panelists and presenters, all of you have contributed to making this conference a success and the discussions rich and stimulating.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Traditionally, this conference is an important event in the ECSA calendar. I hope that the contacts and exchanges established during the Best Practices Forum, the DJCC and the Health Ministers conference will continue beyond these meetings. I sincerely hope that we can build on this spirit and the lessons shared here as we move forward with improving the health of all our people. We should not wait for such formal meetings for communication between member states but establish communication strategies with each other so that all of us are able to exchange experiences and best practices.

Before closing, I would like to insist on one last point. The way forward should not be business as usual. It is time to review the strategic framework of the ECSA HC. In all its projects and programmes, priority should be given to member countries so that they have a sense of belonging to the ECSA Health Community and a sense of ownership of its programmes. There is need to bring a new impetus to the way ECSA is at present operating. ECSA must have more visibility, engage in more advocacy, prove it is relevant, reliable and credible as a force for good in the health sector.
I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director General of ECSA HC and the staff of the ECSA Secretariat for all the hard work they have put in for the organisation of this conference.

I would also wish to thank the Ministers and heads of delegations for attending and participating in this conference and all those who contributed to making this event a success.

In case there is anything that we have missed or not done adequately to make your stay enjoyable, please forgive us.

I thank you all for your time and wish all foreign participants a safe journey home with fond and happy memories of our beautiful island.

I invite Dr Magagula, Director of Health Services from the Kingdom of Switzerland.