

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to participate, even virtually, in this highly significant initiative of "ELPIDA", addressing the effect of COVID-19 on the treatment of childhood cancer.

As a father myself, I can only imagine the anguish of parents whose children have to be hospitalized with cancer, in the very midst of a pandemic of this magnitude.

I stand by them, for them.

The unprecedented pressure put on our Health Systems has challenged our responsibility to provide the best possible conditions of treatment and relief to patients with chronic diseases.

Children are, undeniably, the most vulnerable among them.

We ought to join our efforts to protect our offspring, to offer them a safe space, where they will be able to fight and, eventually, win their own battle against cancer.

In the COVID-19 era of uncertainty, fear and seclusion, health diplomacy has played a decisive role in promoting international cooperation from the very outset of this health crisis.

The exchange of knowledge and experience among scientists from different countries and continents has, indeed, proven to be vital.

Equally significant has been medical communication between countries, aiming to the timely delivery of international assistance, equipment and material.

Within International Organizations, important resolutions have been adopted to coordinate our common response for the fight against COVID-19.

As we are, hopefully, approaching the end of this long and painful road, health diplomacy is bound to play an instrumental role towards the reorganization of our health care systems.

When the COVID-19 crisis abates, multilateral institutions of governance should be reinvigorated, in order to develop a global health governance system that will efficiently respond to future threats.

Based on our strong commitment to multilateralism, Greece is determined to work closely with all relevant United Nations' entities to this end.

We consider as particularly important the further enhancement of the World Health Organization's central role in addressing health challenges of global scale.

At the same time, we strongly believe that the effective tackling of future crises demands the reinforcement of Regional Cooperation.

In this vein, Greece envisages creating appropriate mechanisms to cope with emergency situations, through the evolution and expansion of its trilateral schemes of cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my profound appreciation and gratitude towards "Marianna V. Vardinoyannis-ELPIDA" Oncology Children's Hospital for its admirable and challenging work.

Today's Roundtable Discussion serves as another reminder of "ELPIDA's" continuous dedication to its noble mission.

I am certain that it will promote scientific dialogue and sharing of experiences, thus contributing to the advancement of health diplomacy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece and I, personally, will do anything possible to assist "ELPIDA" in this direction.

I wish you every success in your deliberations.

Thank you very much for your attention.