This statement is made on behalf of the G4 Alliance a global network dedicated to advocating for the neglected surgical patient and a member of the Women’s Major Group.

Investing in surgical, obstetric, trauma and anaesthesia care is an essential strategy for supporting universal health coverage, poverty alleviation, and long-term sustainable development, as well as the right to health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender equality.

5 billion people around the world lack access to surgical care. The WHO recently approved a resolution recognizing the role of emergency and essential surgical care and anaesthesia as part of universal health coverage, ensuring that all people have access to the health care they need without suffering financial hardship, this public health issue impacts people across all ages and demographics, those most disproportionately impacted include women and children.

15% of all pregnancies will result in complications requiring obstetric care, yet 950 million women around the world do not have access to these essential services, contributing to nearly 300,000 maternal deaths each year.

The financial implications of inadequate surgical care can be crippling. It is estimated that each year nearly 33 million people will face catastrophic expenditures when seeking essential surgical and anaesthesia care. Considering that we live in a world where 70% of the population is denied access to essential surgical services, achieving universal health coverage as part of the Sustainable Development Goals will require multilateral and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

The G4 Alliance is committed to advocating for the sustainable provision of safe surgical, obstetric, trauma and anaesthesia care, as an essential component of strengthening healthcare systems and as an important step towards supporting sustainable development, the right to health, and greater equality.

We encourage the HLPF and Member States to support the integration of surgical care as part of UHC and sustainable development. Implementation will require an integrated approach, including coordination of global metrics to track progress, accountability frameworks, and sustainable financing mechanisms.

It is within this context that we would like to ask the panel: What strategies do you recommend for supporting national investment in universal health coverage, including essential services such as surgical care and anaesthesia as part of sustainable development?