We would like to thank the US government for the opportunity to share this statement and acknowledge your leadership and support of World Health Assembly Resolution 68.15, which recognized the importance of strengthening emergency and essential surgical and anaesthesia care as part of universal health coverage.

Around the world today, 5 billion people do not have access to safe, affordable surgical and anaesthesia care, with only 6% of all surgical procedures benefiting the world’s poorest third. Each year, nearly 18 million people continue to die each year from preventable surgical conditions, while millions more suffer preventable disability and co-morbidities.

Surgical care represents a cost-effective and cross-cutting health service that is essential to treat and manage a broad range of conditions and disease categories, encompassing maternal and child health, trauma, noncommunicable conditions such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease, and infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Without investment in surgical care, millions will continue to suffer needless deaths, disabilities and related financial catastrophe every year, as a result of untreated but preventable surgical conditions.

In preparation for the upcoming 70th World Health Assembly, we would like to encourage the US government to continue supporting greater prioritization of surgical and anaesthesia care as essential components of a well-functioning health system.

- At this year’s WHA, delegates will be invited to share progress updates towards WHA 68.15 (Agenda item 17.K in document A70/38). We would like to encourage the US Government to support a decision point presented by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia requesting the Director General to review and report every third year after 2017 to the WHA on global progress of implementation of resolution WHA 68.15 until 2030. This will help to ensure that surgery continues to be prioritized as part of the global health agenda and will help keep countries on-track for achieving their SDG targets.

- We encourage the US Government to prioritize safe surgical care and anaesthesia in your discussions with fellow country delegations and during comments and interventions and we ask that Secretary Price consider integrating the topic of surgical care as part of his opening statements.

- Finally, we hope you will express your country’s support of surgical and anaesthesia care to all Director General candidates and encourage them to commit to supporting a robust and adequately-funded WHO Emergency and Essential Surgical Care Program that is fully integrated across relevant WHO departments and sectors including Family, Women and Children's Health, Health Systems and Innovation, Noncommunicable Diseases and others.

On behalf of the G4 Alliance Network, I would like to thank the US Government for your commitment to supporting surgical and anaesthesia care as an essential strategy for strengthening health systems, fostering peace and supporting robust economic prosperity.