

Speech by Viktor Liashko, Minister of Health of Ukraine

Dear colleagues, friends, partners, thank you for the opportunity to speak today at the conference, which has an ambitious and very important goal—to create a platform for the coordination of international assistance to the Ukrainian health sector.

As we speak here, you can see on the screen the reality in which Ukrainian medicine has been operating for more than three years. There are destroyed hospitals, shelled ambulances, damaged maternity wards. Russian aggression does not pick its targets—it attacks everything. But despite the daily challenges, we have preserved the most important thing—the ability of our healthcare system to function and save lives.

According to World Bank estimates, the total needs for the reconstruction of Ukraine's health sector over the next 10 years are \$19.4 billion. And this is not the final amount. In the last year alone, the number of damaged facilities has increased by almost 40%. To date, more than 2,300 medical buildings have been hit by shelling, 305 of which have been completely destroyed. But even in such conditions, we have not lost our resilience. The health system did not stop for even one day. And we have not only sustained it, we continue to rebuild it. Since the beginning of the full-scale war, more than 1,000 medical buildings have already been fully or partially rebuilt.

We are sincerely grateful to all those who have been with us since the early days. In particular, to the European Commission for the Ukraine Facility initiative. This is not just a resource. It is about trust. It is about planning for the future. I am grateful to the Czech Republic. Under the Ukraine Facility, we are now working together on six reconstruction projects worth over EUR 100 million. For us, this is more than aid—it is a signal of deep solidarity.

I would also like to personally thank the Minister of Health of the Czech Republic, Vlastimil Válek, for his commitment to the common cause—for his constant support, openness to cooperation, and willingness to create new opportunities for partnership. Such trust and practical support allow us not only to respond to the challenges of war, but also to work proactively. We are not waiting for the war to end to start building the future. We're already working on it. The adopted Health System Development Strategy 2030 is our guide. It sets out priorities: access to care, staff development, digitization. We started work on it before the war and adapted it to the new reality after February 24th. And today, it is a living, up-to-date document.

I am convinced that no infrastructure, not even the most modern, will be effective without specialist doctors. That is why our next priority is to improve the qualifications of Ukrainian doctors. To this end, the International Medical Partnership Program was created on the initiative of the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska. It has already facilitated more than 60 partnerships between Ukrainian and foreign hospitals from 22 countries. This is not a formality. This is a true collaboration that is changing medicine here and now. This is a practice that Ukrainian doctors are bringing home and applying in their facilities. Thank you to everyone who supports this initiative. In particular, the First Lady of the Czech Republic, Eva Pavlova. Today, two more memoranda will be signed with Czech hospitals, which is another important step forward.

Let me end with an example that epitomizes all this: Kyiv Regional Children's Hospital. It has an active partnership with Meyer Hospital in Florence and with Rigshospitalet in Denmark. Its doctors are undergoing training, introducing new approaches, performing very complex operations that would have been impossible just a few years ago. And soon, the facility will be modernized under the Ukraine Facility program. We are not only building walls, but also quality.

We are not just renovating, we are building better. That is the way we are going. And that is only possible together with you.

Thank you for your partnership. Thank you for your support. Thank you for believing in Ukrainian medicine.