GENEVA -7 December 2016- The World Health Organization today joined other international agencies in signing a Statement of Intent to align and “green” procurement of health commodities, in an effort to protect the environment and contribute to sustainable development.

“We need to make sure that when international organizations procure health commodities, we promote responsible consumption and production patterns and support the Sustainable Development Goals,” says WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan in signing the joint statement at WHO Headquarters in Geneva.

WHO and its sister UN agencies collectively procure an estimated $3 billion in health commodities each year. UN agencies procure significant amounts of generic anti-retroviral therapies (ARTs), anti-Malaria drugs and insecticide-impregnated bed nets, anti-TB medicines and condoms as well as certain vaccines. Additional health commodities procured include medical and laboratory equipment and consumables.

The new agreement sends an important message to suppliers and manufacturers of health commodities that purchasers will increasingly be looking for environmentally and socially sourced health commodities, particularly those within the international health development sector.

WHO and the other signatories have agreed to reflect this common commitment to advancing environmental and socially responsible procurement as part of their standard engagement with suppliers and manufactures. They will also include it in their institutional strategies and policies.

Global Fund Executive-Director Dr Mark Dybul, Ms Aurélia Nguyen, Director of Policy and Market Shaping at GAVI, Mr Jan Dusik, Head of UN Environment in Europe, Ms Maria Luisa Silva, Director of the UNDP office in Geneva, and Ms Marilena Viviani, Director of UNICEF’s Geneva Liaison Office, were also present at the signing ceremony today at WHO Headquarters. Other signatory organizations are UNITAID, UNFPA and UNOPS.