Geneva: France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian, and Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO today met at the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations in Geneva to discuss the WHO Academy, which will be the world's largest and most innovative lifelong learning platform in global health.

The WHO Academy aims to reach millions of people worldwide, offering high-tech learning environments at a "hub" in Lyon with "spokes" in the six WHO regions. The Academy will provide learning opportunities for leaders, educators, researchers, health workers, WHO staff and the broader public, and will deliver high quality, multilingual learning, both online and in-person, alongside a cutting-edge simulation centre for health emergencies.

The discussion today follows a Declaration of Intent signed by Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic and Dr Tedros on 11 June 2019, and a pledge by France in the amount of US$ 100 million (€ 90 million) to WHO to support the creation of the WHO Academy, which will be established as an internal division within WHO.

"Technology and innovation in learning are creating exciting new opportunities to accelerate progress towards health for all in every country," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO. "The WHO Academy will support millions of learners to maximize health impacts with the best evidence, adult learning approaches and state-of-the-art technologies."

By propelling and strengthening digital innovations and lifelong learning opportunities around the world, the WHO Academy will play an instrumental role towards achieving WHO's triple billion goal by 2023 and the health Sustainable Development Goals: 1 billion more people will benefit from universal health coverage; 1 billion more will be better protected in health emergencies, and 1 billion more will enjoy improved health and wellbeing.

The funding from France represents a commitment to accelerate the development of the WHO Academy, and confirms the engagement of France -- a longstanding partner of WHO and a key actor in global health – and its strong support to the ambitions of 13thÂÂ WHO General Programme of Work to ensure healthy lives and well-being for all ages.