



71st World Health Assembly

11.1 Draft thirteenth general programme of work, 2019–2023

Honourable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Medical Association, which represents more than 9 million physicians around the world.

As physicians we recognise the need for WHO to be the ‘directing and coordinating body for international health’, given the organisations comparative advantages.

The success of the General Programme of Work (GPW) will depend on strong leadership and diplomacy as well as effective partnerships. We call on member states to ensure adequate unearmarked funding to allow WHO to implement the work programme.

We welcome WHO’s focus on a limited yet ambitious set of priorities, such as universal health coverage and health protection from emergencies for an additional 1 billion people . However, all of the above goals will require a strengthened global health workforce and the engagement of healthcare workers. This should also involve highly qualified health workforce for specialized governmental agencies such as health protection and medicines regulatory authorities.

We call on WHO to involve health professionals organisations in policy development at the global and national level when implementing the GPW and UHC. Lack of and failure to retain well trained health professionals will hinder this goal and we ask WHO to continue its work on strengthening human resources for health and health care systems in general. At the global level the WMA is keen to collaborate with WHO on this issue. At the national level national medical associations can provide a connection between country offices and physicians in the health system whose participation will be key to scaling up UHC.

On the topic of participation, we welcome the explicit emphasis on gender and health, noting that women make up a majority of the health workforce.

The statement is supported by the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS).

Thank you