



144th EB Session

5.6 Health, environment and climate change

Distinguished Delegates,

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

Recognising WHO's leadership role on health and climate change, we welcome its draft global strategy, in particular the proposal to address the wide spectrum of climate change impact on health through cross-sectoral action on determinants of health in all policies (Objective 2). We consider though that much greater emphasis should be placed on the 2 following key policy areas:

- **Trade and economic policies**, in particular trade agreements, should protect, promote and prioritize public health over commercial interests and secure services in the public interest, including those impacting on health and environment.
- **Agriculture and food systems'** transformations (food safety and quality) due to climate change, have a pervasive impact on health, low-income producers and consumers of food being the most exposed.

Furthermore, we welcome the objective 3 to strengthen health sector leadership and governance and recommend developing further on ways to **equip and educate the health workforce**, including physicians, to promote a better environment, address patients' needs, and transmit health knowledge regarding environmental risks to policy-makers, the media and communities.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our concern regarding **health resources** required to empower the health sector in addressing climate change challenges. While primary prevention is essential, it does not replace curative care, rehabilitation and palliative care. We are therefore concerned by WHO's proposed action for "a rebalancing of health sector expenditure towards primary prevention over the long term", which could ultimately impact negatively on the people. We call for solid additional resources to empower the health sector.

Thank you

¹ Draft Strategy, parag. 24