

Prof. Leonid Eidelman
Valedictory Speech
World Medical Association, Tbilisi, Georgia
October 2019

Honorable Ilia Nakashidze,
Prof. Lobzhanidze,
Distinguished guests,

A warm thank you to our hosts here in Georgia for your warm hospitality in this wonderful city of Tbilisi.

My dear friends and colleagues,
It is an honour to address you here and to thank you once again for the opportunity to serve you, the World Medical Association and physicians throughout the world. I am sure that the WMA is an essential organization in the modern world and should be visible, active and presented in important forums.

The purpose of the WMA is to serve humanity by endeavoring to achieve the highest international standards in Medical Education, Medical Science, Medical Art and Medical Ethics, and Health Care for all people in the world.

Since having been inaugurated I have represented the WMA in different meetings. The first one was the Global Conference on Primary Health Care in Astana, Kazakhstan. Universal health coverage is absolutely necessary to achieve sustainable development goal number 3. Primary health care that includes prevention, acute and chronic care is an indispensable platform for Universal Health Coverage.

There are many challenges for Primary Health Care, the most important of them: absence of strong political commitment; difficulties in integration of health goals into non-health sector planning; and lack of intention for physician-led teamwork.

During the meeting, it was noticeable that many participants didn't think the Primary Health Care model should have the physician at the helm of leadership. The conference focused on other health care providers, traditional ones, such as, nurses, pharmacists and social workers and new professions, like, community health workers and healthcare assistants. We should continue to promote the team approach in Primary Health Care and the leading role of physicians.

Universal Health Coverage was one of the central issues at the Japan Medical Association Ceremony and Medical congress and this was continued at The Health Professional Meeting (H20) 2019 Road to Universal Health Coverage in Tokyo, Japan.

During his tenure as president of the World Medical Association, Dr Yoshitake Yokokura considerably promoted UHC.

I also stressed the importance of physician leadership during the WHO Global Coordination Mechanism meeting on Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in Geneva. I took the opportunity to visit the WMA headquarters and express my appreciation to all the WMA staff.

During the ceremony of the German Medical Profession Marking the Withdrawal of the Medical Licenses of Jewish German Doctors 80 years ago, I emphasized the physicians' moral responsibility according to the WMA's Declaration of Geneva, recently updated due to the immense contribution of the German Medical Association, which states that physicians must never use their medical knowledge to violate human rights and civil liberties, even under threat.

Another opportunity to stress the importance of the physician's professional obligation to the patient and the highest ethical standards was at the CPME General Assembly, where the main topic was health care in danger.

During the Swedish Medical Association Annual Meeting, I learned about how Swedish physicians tackle language limitations and cultural differences when taking care of the large number of refugees.

The global issue of violence in the health sector that negatively impacts our ability to treat patients was addressed at the meeting in Mumbai, India.

The future developments in medicine was in center of our meeting at the American Medical Association Headquarters. We discussed: augmented intelligence; environmental intelligence; what physicians want to know about technology; healthcare economy and what is on the horizon.

In attempt to encourage the preparation for the future changes and the new challenges of a constantly evolving profession, the WMA and Israeli Medical Association organised the Physician 2030 meeting, that was attended by over 100 physicians worldwide. It served as a platform for discussions in multiple areas and dimensions of physicians' activity. Issues of the validity of models and predictors in health system, healthcare models and medical workplace in 2030, patient-physician relationship, medical education-how it should be changed and technology- where it can take us, were addressed.

I believe that we must continue to look to the future and be prepared.

Physician burnout is one of the most acute challenges of contemporary medicine and endangers physicians as well as the quality of healthcare. There is a need for studying preventive and treatment solutions. The International College of Person-Centered Medicine has decided to organize meetings on physician burnout and wellbeing every year.

During my presidency year, I visited many physician meetings. You can see them in my report but here I would like to give some specific examples of such meetings.

At the British Medical Association Annual Representative Meeting in Belfast, among others, there were votes on the issue of assisted dying and the BMA's membership in the WMA. The representatives endorsed the continued membership of the BMA in the World Medical Association, for the opportunity it provides to support and influence the development of global health policy.

Dr. Chaand Nagpaul, BMA chair of council, stated the BMA's opposition to Brexit, due to potential damage to the national health service.

The other meeting was CONFEMEL the Spain, Portugal, Latin American and Caribbean Medical Confederation. There were discussions about the specific challenges facing doctors in their respective countries, some of which demanded the WMA intervention. We sent letters to the governments of Honduras, Bolivia and others demanding a change of attitude towards physicians.

Another example was a letter that we sent to the Sudanese Government condemning the use of lethal force against physicians and protesters.

During the European Forum Medical Association annual meeting in Montenegro, one of the presentations was of particular interest to me, because it reflected attitude of young physicians that will definitely influence the workforce in healthcare in the years to come. The European Junior doctors presented the situation of part time employment of junior doctors in Europe and stressed the importance of this possibility to the new generation of doctors.

While attending the 34th CMAAO General Assembly we had the opportunity to visit a palliative care centre supported by the Indian Medical Association. I was much very impressed by great work undertaken by the extremely dedicated staff in this facility.

The climate crisis is on the agenda of the World Medical Association. The professional role of physicians in the fight against climate change was suggested in our paper in Fortune Journal.

The greatest media attention we received was our position against the decision of the International Association of Athletics Federation in the case of Caster Semenya. Our position was based on strict ethical considerations, that a medical treatment is only justified when there is a medical need. Medical treatment for the sole purpose of altering the performance in sports is not permissible.

Finally, I am glad to thank two chairs of council I was privileged to work with, both Dr. Ardis Hoven and Prof. Frank-Ulrich Montgomery. I am grateful to the Secretary General, Dr. Otmar Kloiber and his fantastic team who have supported me throughout my presidency. My deepest appreciation to the leaders from more than one hundred countries that make the WMA so important and so

influential across the globe. I am confident that the WMA will continue to be a beacon for doctors all over the world, to light the way in medical ethics and continue to serve as a voice of doctors, as well as, supporting NMA's and doctors in times of need.

I thank my predecessors and wish great success to the incoming president Dr. Miguel Jorge.

Thank You