**WHO Executive Board 146th session**

**EB146/7.1 Universal health coverage: moving together to build a healthier world**

Honourable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

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

While we acknowledge that Primary Health Care (PHC) as part of a comprehensive Health Care System is a prerequisite for reaching Universal Health Coverage (UHC), we wish to emphasize that it is also central to achieving the SDGs and more than a tool for delivering UHC.

As physicians we took an oath to serve our patients and our communities. We recognize that all should have access to the care they need. Physicians are engaged, alongside other health professionals, to contribute to PHC towards UHC. However, while the report mentions the workforce on more than one occasion, we firmly believe that there are still urgent needs to invest massively in the health workforce, namely in education, decent working conditions, career paths and safe workplaces free of discrimination and violence. In countries with the greatest shortages of health workers, we still see the largest number of unemployed qualified health professionals, particularly those in their early career stages.

Alongside these investments, health systems strengthening to adequately resource PHC is urgently needed. The evidence shows that lack of resources to care for patients is a significant trigger to attrition of the health workforce.

Finally, we believe that everyone should have access to high quality services without fear of financial hardship. We call for sustainable financing systems ensuring that access is based on clinical need and not on the ability to pay. We would also like to reiterate our request to donors to increase their Official Development Assistance towards health systems strengthening to achieve UHC.

Thank you.