



9 November 2020

73rd World Health Assembly (resumed)
Agenda item 13.2: WHO's work in health emergencies

Distinguished Delegates,

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

We welcome the draft resolution EB146.R10 recommended by WHO Executive Board for adoption by the 73rd WHA, and in particular, the references in the preamble to increasing attacks on medical personnel and facilities, to WHO's Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care and to the vital role of a strong health workforce in all phases of health emergencies.

We regret however the lack of consistency between those references and the action items included in the core text of the resolution that fail to include tangible assurances addressing the critical challenges of health personnel on the frontline. We emphasize, in particular, the ethical dilemmas that health professionals experience in emergency contexts that include, but are not limited to, the protection of civilians and healthcare capacities and the respect of medical neutrality. These complex issues constitute essential requirements of an adequate public health emergency policy.

We urge Members States to consider including the following commitments in the resolution:

- Promoting and implementing of the [Ethical Principles of Health Care in Times of Armed Conflict and other Emergencies](#), endorsed by civilian and military healthcare organizations in 2015.
- Implementing the [UN Security Council Resolution 2286](#), condemning attacks and threats against medical personnel and facilities in conflict situations and enforcing adequate accountability mechanism against perpetrators.
- Developing adequate education for the health workforce to ensure rapid detection and response to health emergencies and prevention of epidemics and pandemics.
- Ensuring the security of the supply chain of personal protective equipment for all health personnel on the frontline;
- Providing to WHO the necessary support to fulfil its leadership role in documenting attacks on health personnel and facilities.

Thank you.