



18 January 2021

WHO 148th Executive Board session
Item 14.2 - Strengthening WHO's global emergency preparedness and response

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 report from the Directorate-General on strengthening WHO's global emergency preparedness and response, and emphasize the recent Health Assembly call in the spirit of unity and solidarity, for the intensification of cooperation and collaboration at all levels in order to contain and control outbreaks and mitigate their impacts.

In the pursuit of your reflections, including for the development of a new sustainable model to underpin WHO's leadership in pandemic and epidemic preparedness and response, we strongly recommend taking into consideration 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 are essential and must be incorporated in the discussion to develop an adequate public health emergency policy. To this end, we urgently call for the promotion and implementation of the [Ethical Principles of Health Care in Times of Armed Conflict and other Emergencies](#), endorsed by civilian and military healthcare organizations in 2015.

We emphasize once again the following additional key matters to be addressed:

- 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.
- Providing to WHO the necessary support to fulfil its leadership role in documenting attacks on health personnel and facilities.

Thank you.