

World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA)



Item 15.1 Strengthening WHO preparedness for and response to health emergencies

Honourable Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

I am speaking on behalf of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), which is part of the World Health Professions Alliance, a coalition representing over 41 million dentists, pharmacists, nurses, physicians and physiotherapists.

A healthy and well-protected health workforce is critical to future pandemic preparedness and response. Under-investment and inaction in this area has resulted in a deterioration of working conditions, professional shortages and service disruptions that have severely impacted on people's health.

We strongly support the call for the crucial and urgent increased investment in health systems. However, this should not only be for a global health emergency workforce able to respond rapidly to any acute event, but it must be applied to the health workforce as a whole.

The pandemic highlights that decent, safe and responsive working conditions are essential to continuously deliver better health outcomes and overcome health and economic crises.

In addition, following the International Year of the Health and Care Workers last year, global debate on the safety of health workers and healthcare environments has grown. Safety risks need to be addressed with urgency. As we are preparing strengthened responses to future emergencies, all health sector stakeholders including governments and policy makers need to work together for a common goal: improved working conditions and environments for everyone. This will lead to better patient outcomes.

Members States and WHO must invest now and involve health professionals in the way forward.