

**INAUGURAL PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS DELIVERED ON FRIDAY,
OCTOBER 7, 2022, AT THE 73rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HELD AT THE RITZ CARLTON
HOTEL, BERLIN, GERMANY.**

**DR. OSAHON ENABULELE, M.B.B.S, MHPM, FWACP, FNMA.
President, World Medical Association (2022-2023)**

Distinguished guests, our highly respected leaders and members of the World Medical Association (WMA), President Muhammadu Buhari GCFR, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, The Governor of Edo State, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, our revered Oba of Benin, His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II OGIDIGAN CFR, my mum, Evangelist Rachael Ayi Enabulele, my beloved wife, Associate Professor Joan Enabulele, and my children (Master Efosa Enabulele, Omorovbiye Victoria Enabulele, and Osarumwense Benedict Enabulele), my brothers and sisters, esteemed friends from within and outside Nigeria, and other participants here present, I welcome you all, with profound joy and humility, to my inauguration as the 73rd President of the World Medical Association, having been democratically elected in October 2021.

I congratulate the German Medical Association (GMA) on their 75th year Anniversary and for successfully hosting this 73rd General Assembly. I wish them many more attainments and glories in the years ahead.

As I assume office today as President of the World Medical Association, it is with gratitude and a deep sense of responsibility, that I wish to present my inaugural presidential address.

I wish to express profound gratitude to our Immediate-Past President, Dr. Heidi Stensmyren, and all my predecessors in office for their tremendous efforts to promote and develop the WMA to its present status. I shall make great efforts to consolidate upon their work, even as we seek to pilot the WMA to a higher pedestal.

This occasion is very humbling for me and my family; it is one that evinces lots of emotions, considering the total uniqueness of the events, lasting experiences, and the long tortuous journey that characterized my over 15 years of engagement within the WMA, that culminated in today's historic reality.

It evokes a great sense of pride for me and my country, Nigeria, being the first time, since the formation of WMA in 1947 (75 years ago), that a physician from the West African region of the African continent of 54 countries; a physician from Nigeria (the most populous country in the African continent with a population of over 200 million people), and indeed, a physician from Edo State of Nigeria, in particular, has been elected to lead the WMA.

On behalf of the Nigerian Medical Association, my country (Nigeria), the African continent, and particularly my wife and family, I wish to express profound gratitude to all National Medical Associations in all regions of the WMA, and individual physicians across the globe, for electing me to serve as President of WMA for the 2022-2023 Executive Year.

Coming from an under-represented and poorly understood African continent that is largely deprived of quality healthcare, I consider my election to the office of President of WMA as a propitious opportunity and a call to make positive impact through leading initiatives that shall

enhance the fortunes of the WMA as a whole, the well-being, rights and professional autonomy of physicians across the globe, and strengthen healthcare systems of countries, to help them achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030), through actions on the socio-economic, commercial and environmental determinants of Health, and the mitigation of the effects of climate change.

As the World transits to a post-COVID-19 pandemic era, I will like to draw our attention to a few critical areas, particularly following lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic era; viz: building resilient health systems; human resources for health; safety of physicians and other health care providers; public communication and engagement of physicians.

In building resilient health systems, the WMA will have to continue to champion the need for global solidarity in Health, equitable access to vaccines and drug treatments, including their research and development, appropriate investments in the well-being, and protection of physicians and other health professionals.

WMA will have to continue to promote physician-led multi-disciplinary primary health care, ethical and person-centered care based on best evidence, and appropriate communication with patients, families and the public (in a way that secures their trust at all times).

During my tenure, our leadership will uphold the vision and mission of the WMA and implement the WMA strategic plan, with full responsibility as contained in Article 2 of the WMA constitution.

The WMA mission states that ‘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 healthcare for all people in the world.’

This will be our starting point; we can only move higher.

In line with the WMA strategic plan, the WMA would be an untiring advocate of Global Public Health interventions to reduce or eliminate the staggering health inequities and inequalities, across the globe.

According to World Health Organization estimates, by the year 2030, the world will need about 18-20 million more health workers, to attain Universal Health Coverage. Therefore, to achieve UHC and SDG, the critical issue of Human Resource for Health which afflicts every country, even though worse in lower, low- and middle-income countries (LLMICs), needs to be addressed robustly.

The WMA shall advocate that countries take urgent steps to invest more in the well-being, working and living conditions of physicians and other health professionals. This is to help reduce or eliminate **physical and mental burn-out of physicians**, and the **brain drain** of physicians and other health professionals (especially from already underserved countries).

To motivate physicians and other health professionals, WMA shall seek to establish a **WMA Global Healthcare Excellence Award Scheme** to reward excellence, and the sense of duty, diligence and uncommon commitment.

WMA shall strongly promote and advocate a **template on physicians' rights**, to go along with physician responsibilities, as a counter measure to the increasing risk and cases of violence against physicians and other health professionals. We shall also promote the practical implementation of the **WMA safe healthcare initiative**.

WMA is a rich repository of policy documents on various health issues, and continues to do important work in the area of medical ethics.

While we shall promote ongoing efforts to revise the Declaration of Helsinki, we shall also seek to promote the practical application of the Declaration of Geneva and the revised International Code of Medical Ethics, in the work we do as physicians.

Undoubtedly, WMA has been doing great works since its establishment in 1947, in line with its objectives. But it is worrisome that many members in its regions, still have little or no knowledge and appreciation of the work the WMA does.

To address this situation, the WMA shall encourage its constituent member NMAs, to engage their members more on the important work of the WMA, while as WMA President, we shall endeavour to take the WMA to individual physicians through the organization of a quarterly Regional Roundtable to be called "**Meet the WMA President.**"

This Roundtable shall hopefully, create greater awareness about the WMA, deepen membership integration and inclusiveness, and drive greater participation of physicians, and our constituent members in the affairs of the WMA.

Furthermore, the "Meet the WMA President" Roundtable shall serve as a platform to receive and share the ideas and experiences of individual physicians and members of the WMA, no matter their location, and resolve wrong perceptions about the WMA.

Sustained efforts shall also be made to strengthen and promote the work of the Junior Doctors Network and the Associate Members of the WMA.

As the largest physician organization in the world, we shall continue to strengthen our partnership and collaboration with governments and bodies such as the World Health Organization, the Medical Women International Association, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Organization of Family Doctors, the Commonwealth Medical Association, the World Veterinary Association, the International Committee of Military Medicine, the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Physicians, and many other organizations we cooperate with.

CONCLUSION

It is commonly said that at times, history and fate meet at a single place to shape a turning point. Surely, after 75 years, we are now at such a point in the life of our association, where if

we must achieve our individual and collective dreams, we must be prepared to continuously organize for positive action.

As we journey through the next one year and seek to advance the fortunes of the WMA, our noble Medical Profession, and Health systems around the world, let us realize that our individual and collective actions will surely shape the course, character and destiny of the WMA.

Therefore, I urge all physicians and members of WMA to commit to putting WMA first, and make the needed efforts to pilot it, and health systems in the world, to more progressive levels.

I call on governmental and non-governmental bodies to join hands with the WMA in our collective quest to address the various challenges confronting the health and well-being of citizens, physicians and other health professionals.

APPRECIATION

I thank our Almighty and Omnipresent creator for His grace, guidance, protection, favour and blessings over the years.

I am grateful to all individuals and groups present at this occasion, and those at home in Nigeria and elsewhere, who, at various times, played supportive roles in my journey towards the presidency of the WMA.

I thank specially, the Nigerian Medical Association, and all physicians in Nigeria and Africa, and indeed all physicians across the globe, for their varied support.

I thank the Federal Government of Nigeria, Edo State Government, our revered Oba of Benin, His Royal Majesty, Omo N'Oba N'Edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Ewuare II OGIDIGAN CFR, His Eminence, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar III, CFR, mni, The Sultan of Sokoto, the Chief Medical Director (Prof. Darlington Obaseki) and Management Board of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (where I practice), and the Chief Medical Director (Prof. Christopher Bode) and Management Board of Lagos University Teaching Hospital (where I serve as a Management Board Member) for their strong expression of support for my presidency.

I must specially acknowledge the encouragement and support of my special Guests, colleagues, friends, brothers, sisters, and in-laws from Nigeria, UK, USA, Finland, and elsewhere, who made it to this event, as well as the officers, officials, and staff of both the WMA and the German Medical Association (GMA), who helped to facilitate the processing of visas.

I dedicate this day to:

(i) my parents; my mother, Evangelist Rachael Ayi Enabulele, and my father, Elder Jonathan Enabulele JP, both of whom imbibed in me and my other siblings, cardinal and theological virtues, and inculcated in us a culture of discipline, selflessness, and a life of values. Sadly, my father, Elder Jonathan Igbineweka Enabulele JP, who had truly looked forward to

a day like this, never had the opportunity to witness this moment, as he passed on in the year 2013, while I was away serving as President of Nigerian Medical Association. Daddy, may your great soul continue to Rest in Perfect Peace.

ii) my wife, Associate Professor (Dr) Joan Enabulele, and my children (Efosa Benedict Enabulele, Victoria Omorovbiye Enabulele, and Osarumwense Michael Enabulele). I thank them for their ceaseless prayers, unimaginable sacrifices, patience, tolerance, understanding, continuous support, encouragement, love and care, in all my years of struggle, even in the face of difficulties and frustrating challenges. Thank you for always enduring my long absence from home in the course of my leadership endeavours.

I thank my parents-in-law, my dear cousin (Engr. Ferguson Enabulele), my other siblings and in-laws (home and abroad) for their sustained prayers and support. I particularly thank my elder brother (Mr. Ernest Oghogho Enabulele), my elder sister (Mrs. Akugbe Dorothy Ehigiator), and my little dear sister (Mrs Efe Tracy Idahosa), and their spouses for attending my inauguration and for their strong support over the years.

I am exceedingly grateful to the Dr. Benson Okwara-led Lionkiller's Inauguration Team for their contributions towards the success of my inauguration.

As we look forward to very exciting times ahead, I promise to work very hard to vindicate the initiatives that led to the birth of WMA by its founders.

I promise to advance the principle of collectivism by working with other leaders and members of the WMA to provide an emotionally intelligent leadership, with the transformation of the WMA into a beautiful symphony of comradeship, that enables the efficient and effective implementation of the WMA strategic plans.

I cannot end this address without paying special tribute to our colleagues who lost their lives as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. May their great souls continue to rest in perfect peace.

My heart goes out to our colleagues in Ukraine and other troubled parts of the world who are battling to deliver care in the worst of human conditions due to wars, conflicts, disasters, sectarian crisis, oppressive regimes, etc.

I pray God to grant you all journey mercies back to your respective homes.

I thank you for your kind attention.



Dr. Osahon ENABULELE, M.B.B.S, MHPM, FWACP, FNMA.
President, World Medical Association.

Date: Friday, October 7, 2022.