



World Health Professions Alliance WHPA

Executive Board 134th Session

Agenda Item 13.2: WHO's response, and role as the health cluster lead, in meeting the growing demands of health in humanitarian emergencies

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Medical Association, the International Council of Nurses, the International Pharmaceutical Federation, the World Confederation for Physical Therapy and the World Dental Federation, which together form the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA) representing millions of health workers worldwide. The Statement is also supported by the International Hospital Federation, the International Confederation of Midwives and the International Federation of Medical Students Associations.

We have strongly supported the adoption of the resolution on WHO's role as the health cluster lead in meeting the growing demands of health in humanitarian emergencies. We see it as a firm and positive affirmation of the Member States commitment to protect health workers, services and patients.

Underlining WHO's unique role in collecting and disseminating data on attacks, we welcome the work started in this area and fully support WHO's aim to strengthen advocacy for the neutrality of health workers.

Health workers are on the frontline during complex humanitarian emergencies. Increasingly, in crises where health needs are most urgent, health care workers, facilities and transports are at greatest risk of assault, arrest and obstruction of their duties. Increasingly, these are targeted by parties in conflict. Health workers are exposed to serious risks of injuries and death. We are very concerned by these recent developments that undermine basic humanitarian principles and values, medical ethics and the right of populations to access health care.

Reminding States of their positive obligations, we therefore strongly recommend, in the framework of the resolution, that Member States adopt, as a matter of priority, solid measures ensuring that health care personnel, facilities and transports exclusively assigned to caring for the sick and injured are fully respected and protected in all circumstances, in accordance with ethics principles and the rules of humanitarian law.

Thank you for your kind attention.

World Health Professions Alliance WHPA
c/o World Medical Association
13, Chemin du Levant
01210 Ferney-Voltaire
France

Phone: 0033 (0) 450 40 7575
Fax: 0033 (0) 450 40 5937
Email: whpa@wma.net
www.whpa.org