



WMA

WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



WMA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Kigali, Rwanda
4 - 7 October 2023



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MESSAGE FROM THE WMA PRESIDENT

As we reflect on the challenges and triumphs of the past year, it is clear that physicians and the global medical community have faced unprecedented hurdles. In some regions, the burden of the pandemic persists, underscoring the urgent need for robust pandemic preparedness and response measures.

The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change serves as a stark reminder of the far-reaching impacts of climate change on human health. From the rise in vector-borne and food-borne diseases to the exacerbation of mental health conditions, the toll on human lives is undeniable. Additionally, escalating conflicts and violence have displaced millions of people around the globe, pushing more people towards poverty and famine, placing immense strain on healthcare systems and threatening the fundamental right to health.

Against this backdrop, the rise in workplace violence against physicians and healthcare professionals is deeply concerning. We must advocate for zero-tolerance laws and policies to ensure a safe working environment for all healthcare personnel, particularly women.

Amid these challenges, the role of the World Medical Association (WMA) in setting medical ethics standards and advocating for physician rights has never been more vital.

The ongoing work on the Declaration of Helsinki exemplifies our dedication to advancing medical ethics and protecting human subjects in research.

Through extensive regional consultations and rigorous review processes, we are poised to adopt updated standards that will serve as a beacon of integrity for medical research worldwide.

In advocating for bold climate and health action, the WMA calls for a transition to renewable energy sources. Our recent advocacy efforts, including the co-signing of an open letter to the COP28 Presidency, underscore our commitment to addressing the urgent health threats posed by climate change.



The adoption of political declarations on tuberculosis, pandemic preparedness, and universal health coverage at the last United Nations General Assembly in New York represents significant milestones in our collective efforts to address those three global health challenges. As we move forward, it is imperative that we translate these declarations into tangible actions on the ground, with a focus on equitable implementation and sustainable financing.

Looking ahead to 2024, I remain optimistic that we will see progress in building resilience against future pandemics, promoting peace, and safeguarding human rights. As we prepare for the UN General Assembly in September 2024, I hope we will witness fewer words and more actions on the ground urgently addressing anti-microbial resistance.

In the year ahead, let us redouble our efforts to protect the rights and safety of physicians worldwide and ensure that no one is left behind in our pursuit of health for all. With your continued support and trust, I am confident that we can overcome the challenges ahead and build a healthier, more equitable world.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to the mission of the World Medical Association.

DR LUJAIN ALQODMANI
WMA PRESIDENT

Policies adopted at the General Assembly 2023 - Kigali

- WMA Declaration of Washington on Biological Weapons (revised)
- WMA Declaration on the Ethical Use of Medical Technology (revised)
- WMA Statement in Times of Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence (revised)
- WMA Statement on Forced or Coerced Sterilisation (revised)
- WMA Statement on Human Health as a Primary Policy Focus for Governments Worldwide
- WMA Statement on Medical Ethics during Public Health Emergencies
- WMA Statement on Natural Variations of Human Sexuality (revised)
- WMA Statement on Primary Health Care
- WMA Statement on Electronic Cigarettes and Other Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (revised)
- WMA Resolution on International Medical Meetings in Countries Persecuting Physicians against Medical Ethics and Human Rights Standards
- WMA Resolution Condemning the Violence against Physicians in Nepal
- WMA Resolution for an Immediate and Effective Ceasefire in Sudan and the Protection of Health Care (revised)
- WMA Resolution in Support of the Medical Associations in Latin America and the Caribbean (revised)
- WMA Resolution on Acknowledgement and Condemnation of the Human Rights Violations against the Uyghurs and Other Minorities in China
- WMA Resolution on Anti-LGBTQ Legislation in Uganda (revised)
- WMA Resolution on Human Rights Demonstrations in Iran (revised)
- WMA Resolution on Medical Workforce (revised)

Policies reaffirmed by the 223rd Council Session, Nairobi, April 2023 and the 224th Council Session, Kigali, October 2023

- WMA Statement on Advance Directives (Living Wills) (with minor revision)
- WMA Statement on Forensic Investigation of the Missing (with minor revision)
- WMA Statement on Fungal Disease Diagnosis and Management (with minor revision)
- WMA Statement on the Right to Rehabilitation for Victims of Torture (with minor revision)
- WMA Statement on the United Nations Resolution for a Moratorium on the Use of the Death Penalty (with minor revision)
- WMA Resolution on Collaboration Between Human and Veterinary Medicine (with minor revision)
- WMA Resolution on Prohibition of Physician Participation in Capital Punishment (with minor revision)
- WMA Resolution on Supporting the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (with minor revision)

WMA endorsed the:

- WFME Global Standards for Quality Improvement: Postgraduate Medical Education 2023 and as a consequence, the following policy was updated:
- WMA Resolution on WFME Global Standards for Quality Improvement of Medical Education

WMA General Assembly 2023 in Kigali, Rwanda

The warm welcome by Dr David Ntirushwa, President of the Rwanda Medical Association, reflected the spirit of collaboration among delegates.

The Honorable Dr Sabin Nsanzimana, Minister of Health of Rwanda, delivered a poignant address highlighting the challenges faced by the medical profession during the Covid-19 pandemic. He emphasized the need for resilience, education, and a commitment to fundamental principles like medical ethics. Dr Nsanzimana's reference to Rwanda's tragic history served as a powerful reminder of the strength that can emerge from adversity.

The tribute to outgoing President Dr Osahon Enabulele by Dr Jungyul Park underscored Dr Enabulele's remarkable contributions to the medical profession, human rights advocacy, and his role as the first West African president of the WMA.

Dr Enabulele's valedictory address provided a reflective overview of his term, highlighting advocacy efforts, defense of colleagues, and a commitment to universal health coverage.

The installation of the new President, Dr Lujain Alqodmani, marked a symbolic transition, with Dr Alqodmani's inaugural address outlining her vision for the future of the WMA.

The Plenary Session covered various important aspects, including a moment of silence for Dr Anthea Mowat, past Interim Chair of the Associate Members, and other colleagues who have passed away during the past year.

The election of the new President for 2024-2025, Dr Ashok Philip, highlighted the democratic processes within the WMA. Dr Philip's acceptance speech expressed gratitude and commitment to collaboration for the benefit of patients and the medical profession.

The resolutions adopted reflect a commitment to human rights, medical ethics, and global health, setting the stage for continued collaboration and advocacy in the years to come. The Assembly's proceedings demonstrate the WMA's dedication to transparency, inclusivity, and responsible governance, ensuring that the medical community remains a driving force for positive change worldwide.



CEREMONIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN KIGALI, RWANDA

World Medical Association at COP 28 Dubai - Summary Report

A seven-member delegation from the World Medical Association attended COP 28 in Dubai from 30 November to 12 December 2023. Led by Dr Lujain Alqodmani and Dr Ankush Bansal, the WMA collaborated with the World Health Organization (WHO), Global Climate & Health Alliance (GCHA) and other healthcare entities.

The most notable development at the conference for WMA was the initiation of the first themed Health Day at a COP. This was held on 3 December 2023.

At the opening, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), emphasized that health is the human face of climate change and that the health workforce has a role to speak up for a cleaner, healthier future.

The second notable development of the conference was the first ministerial high-level meeting on health at a COP. Dr Lujain Alqodmani, President of WMA and the only invited speaker of an NGO, gave an inspiring call to action to the over 49 Ministers of Health and representatives to 25+ additional Ministries of Health present at the meeting. Prior to the conference, the WMA supported the initiative of a COP28 declaration on climate and health calling on nations to take rapid, sustainable, equitable action on climate change from the perspective of health. By the close of COP, approximately 143 nations had signed this declaration. In addition, the WMA signed the Health Community Call for a Phase-out of Fossil Fuels. The COP 28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action was also generated at COP 28 and signed by 158 nations.

During the conference, the WMA delegation was active in side-events as presenters or panelists:

- Dr Ankush Bansal served as a panelist at the WHO Pavilion on a session hosted by both Harvard University's Tseng-Hsi (T.H.) Chan School of Public Health and the François-Xavier Bagnoud (FXB) Center for Health & Human Rights, entitled "Linking Agendas on Climate Change & Health at the UNFCCC and World Health Assembly". Dr Bansal discussed WMA policies on climate change and health, WMA work at COP and the World Health Assembly (WHA), and how the WMA advocates for synergy and action among the WMA, UNFCCC, and WHA.
- Dr Muha Hassan was invited to deliver a talk on how digital health technologies contribute to climate change mitigation efforts and the development of climate resilient technologies in the healthcare sector as part of a 'Digital health and youth' session hosted by YOUNGO at the Climate Live pavilion.
- On 6 December, Dr Johanna Schauer-Berg served as panelist at a session on Linking Agendas of the UNFCCC and the World Health Assembly in Latin America and the Caribbean. The panel was kindly hosted at the Guatemala Pavillion on behalf of AILAC and facilitated by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the InterAmerican Institute for Global Change Research.

The WMA delegation collaborated with physicians, nurses, pharmacists, academics, students and scientists from around the world in the climate and health space through the Global Climate and Health Alliance (GCHA) and daily policy meetings. The WMA delegation contributed to these meetings based on monitoring of negotiations, party outreach and analysis of the health presence at COP 28.

Protecting physicians against growing threats to their autonomy and safety

The year 2023 was marked by a high number of intense conflicts in many parts of the world, exposing healthcare to constant threats and attacks, jeopardizing the lives of health personnel and patients and deteriorating already fragile health systems. This is not to mention the cascading impact of violence on infrastructure, the environment, the availability of water and other basic needs of the population - a pattern conducive to the emergence of severe infectious diseases. This in turn led to more dead, injured and sick people, with health systems in ruins, a lack of medical equipment as well as understaffed facilities and exhausted health personnel.

The WMA has this year again employed every effort to alert and condemn violence against physicians and other health personnel, calling tirelessly for sustainable and robust national and international regulations to put an end to this scourge. The support of WMA members, documenting occurrences of violence in their countries and relaying our calls, has been essential to expanding our actions worldwide. WMA's collaborations within the context of the "Health Care in Danger" (HCiD) initiative led by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have also been instrumental to collect accurate information and reflect on the best strategies for advocacy and the monitoring of violence.



· HEARING OF TMA'S LEADERS, 10 JANUARY 2023, ANKARA + HEARING OF DR ŞEBNEM KORUR FİNCANCI, 11 JANUARY 2023, ISTANBUL - WITH DR JACQUES DE HALLER, PRESIDENT OF WMA ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

'Despite the critical importance of physicians and other health professionals in the delivery of quality healthcare to citizens, they are still being buffeted with violence in their workplaces, both in peace and conflict times'

WMA Past-President, Dr Osahon Enabulele, May 2023

In accordance with its well-established core policies, the WMA has spoken out on several occasions this year on armed conflicts that seriously endanger health care, requesting parties to respect ethical principles, including medical neutrality, as well as international humanitarian law. In its interventions on the conflicts in Ukraine, Sudan, and more recently in Israel and Gaza, the WMA has consistently emphasised that health personnel and facilities must never be a target, that access to healthcare must always be guaranteed and that health facilities and signs of protection must never be abused for other purposes.

However, violence against health care does not only occur in armed conflict settings. It takes on other forms and is no less a reality in other regions of the world. Last October, the WMA General Assembly condemned the surge in attacks on physicians and the widespread violence occurring within health institutions in Nepal. That same month, our Pakistani member asked for WMA's support to demand the immediate liberation of Dr Yasmin Rashid, a 70-year-old physician with an exemplary record of service, in administrative detention in Pakistan, allegedly for her "inflammatory speech" during the crackdown on the riots of 9 May.

Protecting physicians against growing threats to their autonomy and safety

Physicians are becoming pawns in struggles for power which threaten democracy. As Dr Osahon Enabulele noted: *'Most disturbing is the involvement of repressive regimes in some countries that have undertaken an unholy mission of undermining the professional freedom, independence and autonomy of physicians'*. The persistent coercion by the Turkish authorities of the Turkish Medical Association (TMA) and its members over the past year is one striking example of such abuse of authority.

On 30 November, after numerous postponements, a civil court in Ankara arbitrarily dismissed eleven physicians from their elected positions on the Central Council of the Turkish Medical Association for threatening national security by acting outside the scope of the Association's mission. The same goes for Dr Şebnem Korur Fincancı, President of the TMA, who was sentenced in January 2023 to almost three years' imprisonment on a charge of "terrorist propaganda" for expressing a medical opinion calling for an independent investigation into the possible use of chemical weapons in the region. Dr Korur Fincancı, held in pre-trial detention for nearly three months, was released pending appeal.



COURT TRIAL OF TMA'S LEADERS. 22 JUNE 2023, ANKARA - WITH WMA PRESIDENT OSAHON ENABULELE



HEARING OF TMA'S LEADERS, 10.01.2023, ANKARA + HEARING OF DR ŞEBNEM KORUR FINCANCI, 11.01.2023, ISTANBUL - WITH DR OSAHON ENABULELE, WMA PRESIDENT AND DR JACQUES DE HALLER, PRESIDENT OF WMA ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

As part of a coalition of medical and human rights organisations, coordinated by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) and in collaboration with the TMA, the WMA has been monitoring the situation carefully throughout the year and has advocated at every stage of the legal proceedings so far. The WMA has consistently denounced the relentless harassment against the TMA and its members, and demanded that physicians not be punished for respecting their ethical obligations "to practise medicine fairly and justly and provide care based on the patient's health needs without bias or engaging in discriminatory conduct on the basis of age, disease or disability, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, political affiliation, race, culture, sexual orientation, social standing, or any other factor" (para. 2 WMA International Code of Medical Ethics).

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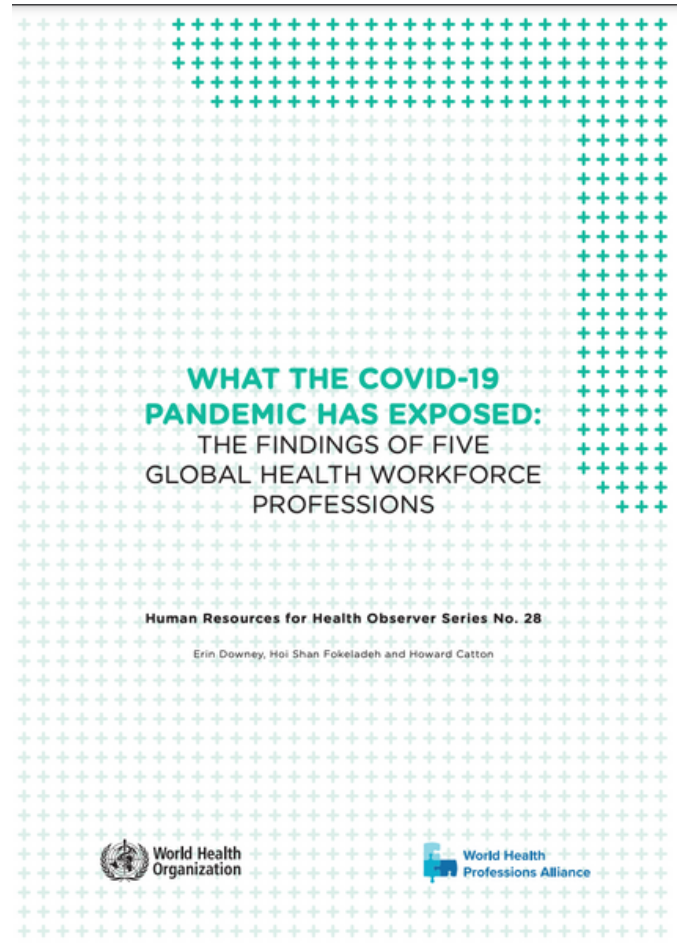
WHPA report on COVID impact on health professionals

This report by the World Medical Association, World Health Professions Alliance and the World Health Organization has revealed the extent of the physical and psychological damage done to healthcare professionals during the Covid-19 pandemic because the health systems they worked in failed to protect them.

The report, published in February 2023, pulls together evidence of the impact of the pandemic from the WHPA’s five members, the main health professionals organisations, which in total represent 41 million healthcare professionals. View the report [here](#).

Key findings of the report

- Investing in and ensuring access to mental health and psychosocial support services for HCWs globally is paramount.
- HCWs interpret the lack of systematic protection mechanisms for their safety and security as being undervalued. This exacerbates the workload burden, resulting in temporary and permanent departures from service,
- The need for HCW representation at high levels of planning, strategy and decision-making
- Vaccination communication strategies should be dual-purpose, both for this pandemic and other pervasive and long-standing vaccination challenges.
- Providing vaccinations training for HCWs



- Guidelines and recommendations for HCWs testing for COVID-19 are available in most countries, however, routine testing of the HCWF is not implemented.
- Health workers experienced incidents of violence or discrimination against them due to COVID-19.
- Interruptions of HCW education were profound.
- Societal inequalities across and within countries have been exacerbated during the pandemic.

Box 2. Objectives of the campaign to support the International Year of Health and Care Workers



The World Together: Establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating body to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response

In December 2021, the World Health Assembly made the decision to develop a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, referred to as the “Pandemic Treaty”.

The World Medical Association is actively engaged in this process, which is a positive step towards ensuring global health security.

This treaty will provide recommendations for strengthening pandemic preparedness and response in the following categories: leadership and governance, systems and tools, financing and equity. In addition, the WMA sees it as a valuable asset for WHO, complementing the International Health Regulations, which have been in place since 1969 (last revised in 2005) to prevent the spread of disease across borders.

Throughout the reporting period, the WMA closely monitored the sessions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB), responsible for drafting the WHO instrument, and made significant contributions to various public hearings. In December 2022, the WMA and WHPA collaborated on a constituency statement to the INB secretariat, providing specific suggestions for rewording the draft version. Additionally, they reached out to the missions in Geneva, highlighting the significance of bolstering the health workforce while maintaining the uninterrupted provision of other essential health and care services.

“The extreme conditions generated by the pandemic highlight the need for decent, safe, and responsive working conditions to deliver better health outcomes. Safe and supportive working environments also ensure the retention of qualified health workers to maximize investments made in health education and training. Specifically in pandemics, this means measures to avoid exhaustion, mental health traumas and burn out caused by health systems gaps as well as actions to prevent workplace violence.”

Constituency statement to the WHO Executive Board 152
(Jan-Feb 2023)

In an effort to better prepare the world for another possible health emergency, WHO is amending the International Health Regulations. The World Medical Association (WMA) has been actively involved in the meetings of the World Health Organization (WHO) Working Group on amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) (WGIHR) since November 2022. The goal of these amendments is to supplement the International Health Regulations and International Non-Binding Instruments.

We received positive feedback from several missions regarding our interventions during the WHO Executive Board meeting on the February draft version of the document. In a public statement to the INB bureau and interested missions during the public hearing of the INB at the end of February 2023, we reiterated our demands for healthcare system strengthening and better support for the health workforce with confidence. In addition, we have requested alignment with existing WHO guiding documents related to the health workforce.

To further strengthen these efforts, the United Nations (UN) hosted a High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Preparedness and Response ahead of the UN General Assembly, following the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage in September 2023. The WMA delegation was composed of Dr Osahon Enabulele, WMA President, Dr Lujain Alqodmani, WMA President-Elect, and Dr Julia Tainijoki-Seyer, Senior Medical Advisor.

Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030

In 2021, the World Health Assembly adopted the “Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-2030”. This plan provides strategic direction and suggested actions for stakeholders to eliminate avoidable harm in healthcare and improve patient safety in different practice domains through policy actions and implementation of recommendations at the point of care. The first-ever Global Patient Safety Report was published in 2023 as a reporting mechanism, and WMA had the privilege of participating in the WHO's global experts' consultation to review the results of the ongoing Member State survey and provide input on the Global Patient Safety Report.

In February 2023, the WMA and members of WHPA submitted a statement titled 'Health Workforce Safety is Patient Safety' at the 5th Global Ministerial Summit on Patient Safety in Montreux, Switzerland.

The 2023 World Patient Safety Day had the theme 'Engaging Patients for Patient Safety' and the slogan 'Elevate the Voice of Patients!'. The WMA was actively involved in the planning of this day as a member of the WHO steering committee for World Patient Safety Day.

Positive practice environments are health care settings that provide decent work conditions, and have the power to attract and retain staff, provide quality care and deliver cost-effective, people-centred health care services. One essential element is good occupational safety and health provision(...).

Health professionals need opportunities for education and information to learn, develop, progress and save lives. And professional recognition and empowerment are needed to improve performance and build professional self-worth.

Joint Statement: “Health workforce safety is patient safety”

Revision of the Declaration of Helsinki

The 220th Council (Paris, April 2022) established a workgroup to review the current version of the Declaration of Helsinki (DoH). We are confident that this inclusive approach will result in a comprehensive and well-informed revision of the DoH. The workgroup is led by Dr Jack Resneck Jr. of the American Medical Association and the revision process is collaborative, transparent, and inclusive. Over the course of two years, the workgroup has held regional and topical meetings where local and international experts, as well as engaged audiences with diverse opinions, have discussed specific issues. The resulting proposed edits of the principles are being shared globally for public feedback.

In December 2022, the first regional meeting on the revision process of the DoH was held in Tel Aviv, Israel. The delegates engaged in a fruitful discussion on various topics, including patient informed consent, patient data, and risks to participants. The discussion was centered around the significant changes in the amount of data that can now be gathered and shared, with particular attention given to recent technological advancements such as artificial/augmented intelligence and their use in medicine.

In February 2023, the Brazilian Medical Association hosted the second regional expert meeting in São Paulo, Brazil, which focused on the use of placebos in research on human subjects.

Meanwhile, the Danish Medical Association held a regional meeting in Copenhagen to explore the need for revision of the DoH in light of new and emerging trial designs. In November, the Japan Medical Association organised a conference in Tokyo.

World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness

During the World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness week in November 2023, WMA and WHO organized a webinar to discuss the roles of healthcare professionals' associations and civil society leadership in the international political AMR agenda during the upcoming year. Antimicrobial Resistance is on the rise globally and is estimated to have been directly responsible for 1.3 million deaths in 2019. It also carries significant economic costs and could reduce global GDP by 3.4 trillion USD annually and push 24 million more people into extreme poverty in the next decade if left unchecked.

The burden of AMR is unequal. Low and middle income countries with the greatest unmet needs for diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines are disproportionately affected by drug-resistant infections.

In 2016, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) high-level meeting (HLM) stressed the urgent need for action. Several initiatives started and progress had been made until the COVID-19 pandemic, which undermined surveillance, stewardship and diverted resources from AMR. We are at a critical junction in the aftermath of a global pandemic and gearing up towards another high level meeting on AMR in September of 2024.

WMA participated in the worldwide consultation on the WHO draft People-Centred Framework for addressing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the human health sector. The framework encompasses interventions covering four crucial pillars to overcome people and systems challenges in addressing AMR: infection prevention, access to essential health services, timely and accurate diagnosis, and appropriate and quality-assured treatment.

The Quadripartite Joint Secretariat on AMR, which facilitates collaboration between FAO, UNEP, WHO, and WOAHA, invited the WMA to participate in a webinar consultation in January 2023. This is in preparation for the first Global Human and Veterinary Medicines Regulatory Authorities Summit and Forum to Preserve Antimicrobials, provisionally scheduled for 22-23 March 2023. The consultations gathered stakeholder opinions on how regulations for medicines, enforcement measures, and smart solutions can be used to eliminate the sale of unprescribed antibiotics over-the-counter and online.

The WMA cooperates with PREZODE, an initiative that unites governments, research institutions, academia, civil societies, health agencies, and other relevant entities worldwide to advance research, advocacy, and international collaborations to prevent, reduce, and tackle the emergence of zoonotic diseases. The Executive Committee strongly recommended joining the initiative, as it aligns perfectly with our policies on preventing emergencies.

**Preventing antimicrobial
resistance together**



5th Global Forum on Human Resources for Health

WMA contributed to the preparation and organization of two sessions at the [5th Global Forum on Human Resources for Health](#), which was held in April 2023 on the theme of 'Protecting, safeguarding, and investing in the health and care workforce'. The Forum provided valuable updates on progress in implementation, evidence and experiences in workforce development, as well as opportunities for the post-COVID-19 era.

As a member of the WHO drafting workgroup, WMA played an integral role in developing the conference document, with action points on attracting, retaining, supporting, and re-skilling health and care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, WMA collaborated with several other NGOs to organize a side-event focused on protecting the rights of health and care workers during pandemics and beyond. WMA President, Dr Osahon Enabulele, provided valuable insights from an African perspective.

The event aimed to explore ways to move from technical guidance to effective regulation. During the presentation, the speakers discussed effective ways to safeguard the well-being of healthcare workers in everyday situations and during health emergencies. This is particularly important in the face of a shortage of skilled professionals who put their lives at risk to care for us.

The second session organised by WMA and WHPA focused on the impact of COVID-19 on the health workforce – past, present and future. WHO requested the cooperation of the World Health Professions Alliance to conduct a study on the pandemic's effects on healthcare workers. Reporting the precise number of COVID-19 deaths, including those among healthcare workers (HCWs), is a significant challenge worldwide, even in countries with well-functioning death registration systems.

However, the WHO publication estimates the global number of HCW deaths due to COVID-19 using various analytical approaches. This session marked the official launch of the report and highlighted both the positive outcomes and areas that require further improvement. During the WHPA speakers' presentation, three key impacts of Covid were highlighted.

One of the impacts is the need for mental health support for health professionals, which was brought to the forefront by the pandemic. The Positive Practice Environments campaign by the WHPA aims to identify where this need is being met positively and address any gaps that remain.

The demand for physiotherapy is increasing due to long Covid, and interruptions to essential healthcare during the pandemic have caused significant backlogs. Lessons can be learned from the pandemic, particularly in areas where there are already critical staff shortages and poor working conditions.

The Covid pandemic brought about significant changes to the scope of practice for health professions. Community pharmacies stepped up to play a larger role in vaccinations and disseminating reliable health information, while dentists had a smaller role in these areas. It is clear that the pandemic has highlighted the need for a more flexible and adaptable healthcare system that can respond to changing circumstances.

These changes provide valuable lessons for the push towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC), particularly in light of the High-Level Meeting on UHC at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2023.

WMA interventions to World Health Assembly and WHO Executive Board

The WMA closely follows the activities of the World Health Organization, including its governing meetings, which take place in January and May each year. Having an official observer status with the WHO, the WMA can submit policy statements to its Executive Board and World Health Assembly.

Statements submitted to the 76th World Health Assembly (May 2023)

- [Achieving Universal Health Coverage and the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases](#)
- [Public health emergencies: preparedness and response \(constituency statement\)](#)
- [Global Health for Peace Initiative](#)
- [Social determinants of health](#)

Statements submitted to 152nd Executive Board session (January 2023)

- [Universal Health Coverage \(Constituency statement\)](#)
- [Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases](#)
- [Public health emergencies and responses \(Constituency statement\)](#)
- [Global Health for Peace Initiative](#)
- [Well-being and health promotion](#)
- [Social Determinants of Health](#)

WMA public statements, declarations and open letters

The WMA follows the global health news and issues statements, declarations and open letters to coincide with public events and/or related to current health issues.

- [22 November 2023 - Joint Statement on World Antimicrobial Awareness Week](#)
- [16 February 2023 - Open letter with Annex with specific comments on the zero draft of the future WHO international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response](#)
- [12 June 2023 - Joint WMA-CPME letter to the Turkish authorities in support of the Turkish Medical Association](#)
- [13 June 2023 - Zero Draft Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage - Changes to wording by the World Medical Association](#)
- [27 June 2023 - WMA Statement at the Fourth WHO Forum on Alcohol, Drugs and Addictive Behaviours \(27-30 June 2023\)](#)

Public Relations

WMA has issued a significant number of press releases in support of its members and each time a human rights violation by the health sector was brought to its attention. The press releases are available on the WMA website and were communicated via the WMA social media channels and in the newsletter.

18/12/2023

A Call for Donations to ICRC and Doctors Without Borders to support the humanitarian situation in Gaza

15/12/2023

E-Cigarettes Are Harmful and Not Safe, Warn Physician Leaders

06/12/2023

Reinstate the Turkish Medical Association's Central Council immediately

01/12/2023

Turkish Court Strips Nation's Top Doctors of their Positions

06/11/2023

The World Medical Association and The Standing Committee of European Doctors urge Turkish Authorities to Drop Charges Against Turkish Physician Leaders

19/10/2023

The World Medical Association Demands Immediate Liberation of Pakistani Physician

15/10/2023

The World Medical Association stands firmly for the principles of medical neutrality as defined by the Geneva Convention, and calls on all parties to respect International Law and the integrity of unrelated civilian populations

13/10/2023

WMA Strongly Condemns the Attack of Hamas on Israel, Urging Immediate Liberation of Hostages

11/10/2023

World Physicians Stress The Need of Ethical Use of Medical Technology

10/10/2023

WMA GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023

09/10/2023

World Medical Association Takes Bold Steps to Counter Biological Weapons Threat

07/10/2023

Physician Leaders Condemn Surge in Attacks on Physicians in Nepalese Health Institutions

06/10/2023

Gender Equality In Healthcare Is A Top Priority, Says New Global Physician Leader

28/09/2023

Educating for a Rabies-Free World: 'All for 1, One Health for all'

21/09/2023

WMA Urges Türkiye to Respect Medical Ethics Amid Persecution Concerns

31/07/2023

WMA Welcomes European Court of Human Rights siding with Caster Semenya

16/05/2023

Global Violence Against Physicians Condemned by WMA President

24/04/2023

World Medical Association Council Meeting

22/04/2023

"Grave Concern" Expressed Over UK

Government's Migrants Proposal

21/04/2023

Death Penalty Proposal for Homosexual Offences Condemned by WMA

20/04/2023

Korean Professor Elected Chair of World Medical Association

20/04/2023

Physician Leaders Call for an Effective Ceasefire in Sudan

05/04/2023

Global Medical and Human Rights Groups Call on Türkiye to End Persecution of Doctors

03/04/2023

Report reveals extent of damage caused to healthcare professionals during the Covid-19 pandemic

24/03/2023

World Medical Association condemns death penalty for gay offenders

Constituent Membership

Physicians around the world are typically represented by the national and territorial medical associations of their regions.

Such associations are broadly representative of the physicians of their country by virtue of their membership, with their voting membership being limited to physicians and medical students. They are not subject to or directed by any office or agency of government.

The WMA currently has a total of 114 members as of October 2023. There is a detailed membership list on the [WMA website](#).

Advantages

1. Recognition and acceptance as a member of an international organization such as the WMA lends the power of a global community to a National Medical Association (NMA). This underlines the importance and relevance of the NMA.
2. The WMA is in official relations with United Nations agencies such as the World Health Organization, which gives NMAs and Associate Members access to these international bodies.
3. By participating in debates with colleagues from all over the world, NMAs and Associate Members have the opportunity to collaborate on ethical guidance and leadership in health care.
4. Information and knowledge can be sourced from the WMA, which can contribute to the optimal efficacy of NMAs and individual physicians.
5. NMAs and Associate Members can make use of the WMA's products and services.

Associate Membership

Associate membership is limited to physicians (as defined in the WMA Bylaws) and medical students who are properly enrolled in a recognised medical school, who have applied for such membership and who have paid the amount of dues prescribed for such members. Associate membership is available to these individual physicians and medical students whether or not their National Medical Association is a Constituent Member of the World Medical Association.

The WMA currently has more than 1800 active Associate Members as of April 2023. The registration page is available on the [WMA website](#).

Advantages

1. The privilege of attending and participating in WMA annual assemblies.
2. Introductions to professional leaders in your field and opportunities to visit medical and health institutions abroad.
3. Information on medical meetings abroad.
4. A service department which will assist you in meeting your colleagues both at home and abroad.
5. A membership certificate for display.
6. WMA secretariat consultation, service and small meeting center.
7. Preferred access to the WMA Education Portal for Continuing Medical Education and Continuing Professional Development.
8. Publications of the World Medical Association.
9. Access to internal discussion documents on policy development.

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER FOR THE YEARS 2022 AND 2021

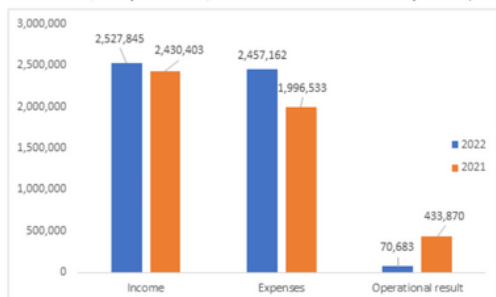
INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEARS 2022 AND 2021

Assets	2022	2021
Current assets	T€	T€
Cash	5 525	4 583
Accounts receivable	154	158
Prepaid expenses	85	135
Non current assets		
Real Estate - net	17	25
Furniture, fixture and office equipment - net	60	35
Total assets	5 841	4 936
Liability and equity		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	356	354
Deferred Income	18	15
Provisions and reserves	973	864
Funds		
Travel stipend fund	33	35
Earmarked funds	392	392
Association equity		
Other Equity	3 346	3 275
Total liability and equity	5 841	4 936
Net result for the year	71	434
Total Association equity	3 346	3 275

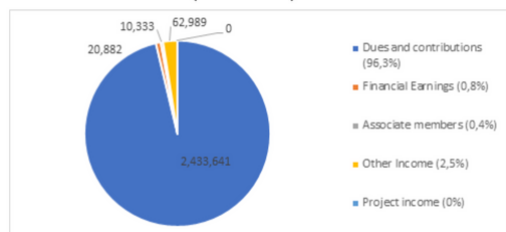
Income	2022	2021
	T€	T€
Dues and contributions	2 434	2 335
Financial earnings	21	5
Associate members - Net	10	15
Other income	63	74
Project income	-	-
Total income	2 528	2 430

Expenses	2022	2021
Administrative overhead		
- Staff expenses	1 338	1 259
- Office expenses	163	253
- Other expenses	423	341
Meeting expenses		
- Council Session	190	24
- General Assembly	150	60
- Other meeting expenses	125	2

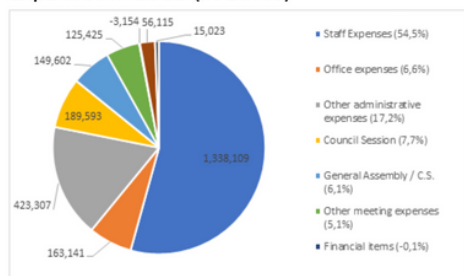
Income, expenses, and result of the year (Euros)



Income in 2022 (in Euros)



Expenses in 2022 (in Euros)



***Ukraine Medical Help Fund, founded in March 2022, by the European Forum of Medical Associations (EFMA), the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) and the World Medical Association, in cooperation with the Polish Chamber of Doctors and Dentists, the Slovakian Medical Association and the Slovakian Medical Chamber, the Japan Medical Association, the French Medical Association and the State Chamber of Physicians of Saxony.**

The primary purpose of the fund is to provide medical supplies and other equipment to maintain health care in Ukraine in cooperation with the Ukrainian Medical Association as well as member and partner organizations in Ukraine and the neighbouring countries.

Total donations have accumulated to 4 251 895,45 Euros (1 480 595,62 Euros were received in 2023). Using these donations, medical supplies have been purchased and delivered at 2 375 097 Euros (325 892,09 Euros were used in 2023). The fund is still live and further donations are welcomed.

WMA LEADERS



Dr Lujain
ALQODMANI

President

Kuwait



Dr Ashok PHILIP

President-Elect

Malaysia



Dr Osahon
ENABULELE

Immediate Past
President

Nigeria



Dr Jung Yul PARK

Chair of Council

Korea



Dr Otmar
KLOIBER

Secretary General



Dr Tohru KAKUTA

Vice-Chair of Council

Japan



Mr Rudolf HENKE

Treasurer

Germany



Dr Steinunn
THÓRDARDÓTTIR

Chair of the Medical
Ethics Committee

Iceland



Dr Jack RESNECK

Chair of the Finance
and Planning
Committee

United States



Dr Zion HAGAY

Chair of the Socio-
Medical Affairs
Committee

Israel



Dr Jacques de
HALLER

Chairperson of the
Associate Members

Switzerland

WMA SECRETARIAT

Dr Julia TAINIJOKI-SEYER
Senior Medical Advisor

Clarisse DELORME
Senior Advocacy Advisor

Yoonsun PARK (Sunny)
Head of Operations

Magda MIHAILA
Communication and
Press Manager

Roderic DENNETT
Spanish Translator

Marie FERREIRA
Technical Assistant

Anne-Marie DELAGE
Office Secretary

Marielle GUIRLET, PhD
WMA Archive Coordinator

Radhia SMAALI
Maintenance



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FUTURE MEETINGS

**Research with vulnerable people - WMA
Declaration of Helsinki revision**

Start date: May 14, 2024

End date: May 15, 2024

Location: Munich, Germany

**WMA Declaration of Helsinki Revision:
Advocacy and Communication**

Start date: August 14, 2024

End date: August 16, 2024

Location: Washington, DC, United States

WMA General Assembly, Helsinki 2024

Start date: October 16, 2024

End date: October 19, 2024

Location: Helsinki, Finland

229th WMA Council Session, Montevideo 2025

Start date: April 24, 2025

End date: April 26, 2025

Location: Montevideo, Uruguay



13, ch. du Levant, CIB – Bâtiment A, 01210,
Ferney-Voltaire, France



wma@wma.net



Phone: +33 4 50 40 75 75
Fax: +33 4 50 40 59 37



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