

World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA)



Constituency statement to the WHA77 (May 2024)

Agenda Item 13.4: Intergovernmental Negotiating Body to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response

Before I start reading the constituency statement, these are the non-state actors co-signing the statement:

- *FDI World Dental Federation*
- *FIP International Pharmaceutical Federation*
- *ICN International Council of Nurses*
- *WMA World Medical Association*
- *World Physiotherapy*
- *The International Society of Paediatric Oncology (SIOP)*

I am speaking on behalf of the International Council of Nurses, which is part of the World Health Professions Alliance. WHPA represents over 41 million dentists, nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and physicians around the world, and has a Memorandum of Understanding with WHO.

We congratulate the INB on the hard work of the last two years and the improvements made to Article 7 concerning the health and care workforce, for which initial agreement was reached in the draft WHO Pandemic Agreement submitted by the INB to the Assembly. We appreciate the inclusion of:

- decent work
- addressing mental health
- prevention and mitigation of violence
- eliminating inequalities, such as unequal remuneration and barriers faced by women
- meaningful consultation and empowerment of health and care workers, and
- ethical international recruitment

in the final draft treaty text.

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We also welcome the emphasis on maintaining essential health care services at all times, which must include oral health and ensure treatment continuity for life-threatening communicable and NCDs.

We regret that the INB has not been able to reach consensus on the entire draft agreement. The drafting period has been a window of opportunity, galvanised by the last pandemic, in which we need to act before the next pandemic occurs. We urge them to continue and complete the negotiation process as soon as possible, so that momentum will not be lost and we will not be caught unprepared, again.

Of the issues still under negotiation, we are particularly concerned about Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing. We highlight the importance of health equity in these negotiations, which should be the beating heart of the pandemic accord. Rapid access to pathogen samples will benefit the health workforce by speeding up response times and reducing the impact of the next pandemic, thereby reducing the strain on health and care workers. Fair and equitable distribution of vaccines, diagnostics and treatments in the event of a pandemic will lower infection rates and caseloads, lowering the burden on the health workforce in all regions of the world. We encourage Member States to set up strong and truly equitable terms on access and benefit sharing for everybody's sake: we are only safe when we are all safe.