

GA PRESIDENT'S REPORT AND REFLECTION

I would like to welcome everyone present at this general assembly, both physically and online. I would like to greet the distinguished authorities: Dr Ruediger Krech Director, Health Promotion WHO; Dr Li Bing, Vice Minister of the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China; Dr Diana Sarfati, Director-General, and Dr Andrew Old, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Health of New Zealand.

In our last congress, the 17th World Congress on Public Health (WCPH), held in Rome in May 2023, we approved a final declaration stating eight learnings and challenges that must orient the activities of the world public health community: (a) the importance of promoting equity; (b) the urgency of action; (c) the need to identify who is and who is not on the side of health as a universal right; (d) the relevance of peace as a fundamental prerequisite for health; (e) the opportunities presented by scientific progress; (f) the need to counteract false information on health and its determinants; (g) the essential role of health promotion workers; and (h) the imperative of working together across sectors. Not by chance, these eight items are incorporated into the WFPHA's mission and goals. Indeed, the current mission is as follows: protecting people and the planet, preventing diseases, and promoting peace, health, and well-being. Guided by this mission, the WFPHA is continuing to work hard.

One critical front has been the promotion of peace. In October 2023, a terrorist attack by Hamas on innocent civilian Israelis triggered a disproportionate reaction by the State of Israel that did not spare the lives of Palestinian civilians either, carrying out a genocide. When these lines are being read, this tragic war remains unresolved. Similar situations have developed in other regions, such as Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, and others. The WFPHA has taken several initiatives, calling on the public health community and world leaders to take the necessary action to stop the violence, allow humanitarian care, and protect healthcare workers.

A second critical front has been tackling the climate crisis. Led by its Environmental Health Working Group, the WFPHA has been very active, highlighting its participation in the COP28 in Dubai. Through its interventions, WFPHA contributed to making more apparent than ever the importance of focusing on public health when dealing effectively with the climate crisis. On this same front, as a significant move towards addressing the urgent challenges of Planetary Health, WFPHA joined numerous academic health institutions, signing the manifesto on the Declaration of Planetary Health.

The WFPHA has also addressed a third important issue: the preparedness for future health crises as the world still deals with COVID-19. This involved active participation in Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) discussions regarding a new Pandemic Treaty and engagements concerning amendments to the International Health Regulations. During these negotiations, WFPHA presented 14 statements urging effective and equitable preparedness and response to pandemics. As we will state at the next WHA, each nation must be furnished with adequate financing and resources, including relevant information and technology.

In a comprehensive review, the WFPHA Tobacco Control Working Group identified tactics employed by the tobacco industry to influence scientific research, politics, law, sport, education, and the media and the strategies for governments and societies to take effective tobacco control measures. Through its Public Health Professionals' Education and Training Working Group, WFPHA worked together with the World Health Organization to prepare a comprehensive roadmap and action plan for training and securing the Public Health and Emergency Workforce. The WFPHA, in collaboration with the World Dental Federation, spearheaded an initiative to emphasize the importance of oral health in the lives of refugees. The Oral Health Working Group developed a policy brief calling for integrating oral health into the primary health packages provided to refugee populations worldwide.

Jointly with the World Organization of Family Doctors and the World Psychiatric Association, WFPHA committed to collaborating to improve the implementation of public

mental interventions to treat mental health conditions, prevent associated impacts, and promote mental well-being.

Still, it is worthwhile mentioning other essential actions related to discussing how to decolonize global health and promote system change, strengthening the participation of young public health professionals in the WFPHA, the joint activities of different working groups such as Indigenous People and Digital Technology, WFPHA's engagement as a member of the newly established WHO Civil Society Commission, discussions about essential public health functions, and WFPHA membership of the Global HPV Consortium, the launch of the Youth Manifesto on AMR on May 2024, having the Young WFPHA as representative of the Quadripartite Joint Secretariat.

To provide the best recommendations to counteract the infodemic phenomenon, the WFPHA conducted a scoping review of evidence regarding misinformation and disinformation in health and created a useful toolkit for healthcare professionals dealing with health-related infodemics.

The WFPHA Immunization Policy Task Force has developed several projects, including: Vaccine Hesitancy Among Healthcare and Public Health Workers - The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic, Sustainable Investment for Immunization Systems, and Eradicating HPV Globally, Advocating for Equitable Gender-Neutral Vaccination.

The 3rd edition of Global Public Health Week (GPHW), on April 2024, with the theme "Fostering Peace as a Prerequisite for Equitable Health", had 84 events involving more than 4 million people worldwide. In 2023, we reached the mark of 139 members.

I would like to thank all our members, public health associations, Governing Council, Advisory Board, committees, and working groups for their significant contribution and our sponsors and partners for their support: the University of Geneva, the European Commission, Pfizer, Colgate, MSD, and GSK. A special thanks to all volunteers and interns who helped the Federation.

As this brief recap makes clear, WFPHA remained active and focused in pursuing its goals. As a new presidency starts in May 2024, headed by an Indigenous woman for the first time, the World Federation will successfully face the current and new challenges to accomplish its mission.