

72nd World Health Assembly

The 72nd World Health Assembly (WHA), the decision-making body of the World Health Organization (WHO), was held in Geneva, Switzerland, 20-28 May 2019.

The outcomes of the WHA included the adoption of a new global strategy on health, environment and climate change, which provides a vision on responding to environmental health risks and challenges. The risks include physical environmental factors, chemical, biological and work-related factors. A commitment was made to invest in safe water, sanitation and hygiene services in health facilities.

Member States also made resolutions on Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Primary Health Care (PHC), Community Health Workers (CHWs), and the upcoming High-Level Meeting (HLM) on UHC in September 2019.

The PHC resolution urges Member States to take measures to implement the Astana declaration adopted in 2018, which recognises the key role that PHC plays in ensuring countries can provide the full range of health services a person needs throughout their life, inclusive of health promotion, disease prevention or treatment, rehabilitation or palliative care. PHC means countries must have quality, integrated health systems, empowered individuals and communities, and must evoke inter-sectoral action in practice, to involve a wide range of sectors in

addressing social, economic, and environmental determinants of health.

The resolution on CHWs recognises the contribution they can make to UHC when they are a part of multi-disciplinary teams, are well trained, effectively supervised, and properly recognised for the work they do.

The resolution in support of preparation of the UN General Assembly HLM on UHC in September called on Member States to focus on the poor, the vulnerable and marginalised individuals and groups in accelerating progress towards UHC. The UN HLM will call for the involvement of governments in coordinating inter-sectoral work required to move towards UHC.

The year 2020 was declared as the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife. A Framework for Action to Strengthen Midwifery Education was launched to guide the development of high-quality, sustainable pre- and in-service midwifery education. In his opening address to the assembly, the WHO Director General named Liberia's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as the Goodwill Ambassador for the health workforce.

A technical brief was given to delegates on the forthcoming Summit on International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD +25) in Nairobi, 12-14 November. This aims to mobilise the political will and financial commitments urgently needed to finally and fully implement the ICPD

Programme of Action on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, among others. The further commitments of this program of action are to be centred around achieving zero unmet need for family planning information and services; zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices against women and girls.

Other notable resolutions included the adoption of a landmark agreement to enhance the transparency of pricing for medicines, vaccines and other health products. An agreement on a common approach to anti-microbial resistance was adopted. Patient safety was recognised as a global health priority. The 11th Edition of the International Classification of Diseases was adopted. For the first time, WHO is classifying gaming disorders as addictive behaviour disorders. Among other ICD-11 decisions are the inclusion of traditional Chinese medicine and removal of gender incongruence out of mental disorders in the ICD system, now moved into sexual health conditions. The new WHO programme budget framework was also approved.

The WHO Director General concluded the Assembly by reminding everyone that the ultimate outcome of the Assembly is not resolutions and decisions: all have a duty to make sure the decisions made take root in our countries and our communities.



Delegates at the closing ceremony of the World Health Assembly

I need you here...

Taking your HIV medication EVERY DAY can help you be here when I grow up. I heard there's a "Triple Pill" that can make it easier.



**Take a Triple a Day.
Every Day.**

Ask your Doctor if there is a Triple Pill for YOU.

The 2014 Namibian Guidelines for Antiretroviral Therapy and The World Health Organization recommend Fixed-Dose Combination Therapy Consolidated Guidelines on the Use of Antiretroviral Drugs for Treating and Preventing HIV Infection, Geneva, World Health Organization, 2013. (<http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/guidelines/arv2013/en>)

