

## ***WHA77 Resolution to accelerate progress towards reducing maternal, newborn and child mortality – support statement from health care professionals*** (July 2024)

On behalf of Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH) Health Care Professional Associations Constituency members: Council of International Neonatal Nurses (COINN), International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), International Council of Nurses (ICN), International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), International Federation of Medical Students Association (IFMSA), International Pharmaceutical Student Federation (IPSF), International Paediatric Association (IPA), World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA)

As health care professional associations, we welcome the resolution to Accelerate progress towards reducing maternal, newborn and child mortality in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal targets 3.1 and 3.2 adopted by Member States at the 77<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

Profoundly alarmed by the current global stagnation and, in some countries, regression, of maternal, newborn and child mortality worldwide, this resolution represents a clear signal that we need to accelerate efforts to reverse the situation to save the lives of mothers and babies, and end preventable stillbirths.

Based on current trends, at least 46 of countries are projected to have a ratio greater than 140 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030, more than double the global target of less than 70 deaths (SDG 3.1). Approximately 64 of countries will miss the neonatal mortality target (SDG 3.2.2), 59 of countries will miss the under-five mortality target (SDG 3.2.1), and 56 of countries will not meet the stillbirth target set by the Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP). In addition, rates of preterm birth have not budged in the past decade, sitting at 9.9% in 2020 compared to 9.8% in 2010. These numbers clearly indicate that the world is not on track to achieve the SDGs for maternal, newborn and child health, and that the incredible gains of the Millennium Development Goal era are being brought to a halt.

This is unacceptable as the majority of these deaths are preventable. We know the main causes of deaths and we know what is needed to accelerate action: political leadership, investments, effective health care packages delivered with quality and equity, subnational planning, budgeting and implementation, standardized and improved data flows, and multisectoral action. We also know that we must address important determinants of maternal, newborn and child mortality, such as malnutrition, inadequate access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), gender equality, and the compounding impacts of conflicts, climate change, higher costs of living, and pandemic threats. Governments must address these issues by implementing cost-effective and quality interventions and allocating the necessary financial resources to ensure their sustainable delivery.

As leaders of health care professional associations, we commend Member States for their commitment to this agenda especially the Government of Somalia for their leadership in the resolution and the President of South Africa as the Chair of the Global Leader's Networks for Women's,

Children's and Adolescents' Health to prioritize this critical agenda at the highest political levels. We look forward to working together with governments and other stakeholders to implement the resolution in order to reduce maternal, newborn and child mortality.

To ensure our continued support , we call upon governments to invest in the health and care workforce, especially *in the education, employment, regulation and retention of the health and care workforce, including midwives, nurses, and neonatal nurses, that is required to provide universal access to, and coverage of, the nationally determined package of sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn and adolescent health care services that are aligned with the principle of decent work* (Paragraph 13 of the resolution). Investing in strengthening the health and care workforce, ensuring that each of them works to the full scope of their professional practice, coordinating all healthcare levels including hospitals and primary healthcare, and ensuring sufficient numbers of skilled personnel will help us to continue delivering quality services and saving the lives of mothers and their babies.

From our side, we re-affirm our commitment to supporting the implementation of the resolution, ensuring that every woman has access to high-quality reproductive and maternal care, and that every baby, including small and sick newborns and babies born too soon, can survive and thrive. We commit to play our role in working with our local associations to improve quality of care, including mentoring and upgrading skills and competencies of health care professionals as well as advocating for adequate numbers and distribution of health care workers. We look forward to joining and supporting in-country advocacy efforts to raise the political profile to prioritize maternal, newborn, and child health in the national agendas.

