

27



146th IPU Assembly - WHO Statement for the General Debate “Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance”

In the words of the Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros, “there cannot be health without peace, and there cannot be peace without health”¹.

Around the world we see a concentration of global crises, leaving an ever-increasing number of people with humanitarian needs and eroding human rights.

Honorable Members, Senators, colleagues, the long-standing collaboration between WHO and IPU enhancing parliamentary engagement on health has never been more critical.

Health is both a pre-condition and an outcome of inclusiveness. It challenges discrimination and delivers on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is also a tracer indicator of how successful societies are in efforts to promote peaceful coexistence.

WHO supports countries to strengthen health policies, including through our Global Health For Peace Initiative, research on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and leadership on global health security architecture.

We address challenges that affect the ability of women, men, and LGBTQI+ people to access quality health services.

We also promote diversity within our Organization, addressing abuses and challenging unequal gender relations.

We harness the power of science to translate the best evidence, innovation, and digital solutions.

¹ <https://www.who.int/initiatives/who-health-and-peace-initiative>

But health for all is a political choice:

- we know nearly all maternal deaths are preventable, but every two minutes a woman dies during pregnancy or childbirth²
- we know sexual and reproductive health and rights are central to every person's health and well-being, but 270 million³ women have an unmet need for contraception⁴
- we know universal health coverage is essential for healthier populations, but almost 2 billion people face catastrophic or impoverishing health spending⁵.

WHO is proud to be further strengthening our collaboration with IPU, recognizing the critical role parliaments play for health in legislation, government accountability, budgeting, and representing people's needs.

WHO will celebrate on 7 April its 75th anniversary fighting for health for all.

As we move towards the UN High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage this September, let us renew our shared vision: health for all, rich and poor, able and disabled, old and young, urban and rural, citizen and refugee. Everyone, everywhere⁶.

² <https://www.who.int/news/item/23-02-2023-a-woman-dies-every-two-minutes-due-to-pregnancy-or-childbirth--un-agencies>

³ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/family-planning-contraception>

⁴ <https://www.who.int/activities/improving-the-health-and-well-being-of-lgbtqi-people>

⁵ [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-\(uhc\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-(uhc))

⁶ <https://www.who.int/director-general/biography>