

## Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly



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### First-ever resolution on social participation for primary health care approved

Member States have agreed on a resolution on social participation in national health planning and implementation, which paves the way for people, communities, and civil society to have a stronger voice in influencing the decisions that affect their health and well-being.

The resolution aims to tackle health inequities and the erosion of trust in health systems, which is crucial in the face of the unprecedented challenges the world is facing such as climate change, conflicts, and pandemic threats.

Growing evidence shows the transformative potential of social participation to foster trust in health systems, advance equity and align healthcare with people's lived experiences. Two-way dialogues between government and the people they serve can lead to health policies, strategies and services that are more responsive to people's needs, particularly those in vulnerable and marginalized situations.

The new resolution recognizes this potential. Its implementation will involve regular and sustained national participatory mechanisms, such as dialogues or consultations and policies that reflect the recommendations generated from these participatory processes.

WHO will continue to work with Member States in implementing this resolution by developing technical guidance and operational tools; offering capacity building support; and documenting and facilitating the sharing of country experiences. WHO is also tasked with reporting progress to the Health Assembly in 2026, 2028 and 2030.

### New strategy to be developed on emergency, critical and operative care

Today, delegates requested the Director-General's support to develop a global strategy and action plan for integrated emergency, critical and operative (ECO) care and services for the period of 2026--2035.

Amidst concurrent human and natural disasters, national health services are under increasing pressure to deliver effective ECO care. Such services address people's health needs across the life course, including infections and injuries, complications during pregnancy and birth, and heart attacks and stroke.

ECO services are foundational to emergency preparedness and response. Delegates noted that COVID-19 had revealed significant gaps in the provision of ECO care globally. In 2023, WHO responded to 65 graded health emergencies worldwide, up from 40 in 2013.

This decision will provide a tangible map for Member States to review and develop policies to enable universal access to ECO care to all people in need by 2035. The strategy will facilitate the implementation of WHA [Resolution 76.2](#) on Integrated emergency, critical and operative care for universal health coverage and protection from health emergencies, which was adopted in 2023.

The WHO secretariat will present a new draft strategy to the Health Assembly in 2026.

### **Countries agree to integrate mental health and psychosocial support in emergency response**

The Health Assembly approved a resolution to strengthen mental health and psychosocial support across all stages of emergencies, including conflicts, natural disasters and humanitarian crises. Nearly all people affected by emergencies will experience psychological distress, with 1 in 5 likely to experience a mental health condition.

The new resolution calls for integrated, quality mental health services which are accessible to all, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected areas. It urges Member States to implement the WHO Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2030, incorporating mental health and psychosocial support into emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

The resolution underscores the need for long-term investments in community-based services and cross-sectoral coordination to improve access to care. It also highlights the mental health needs of humanitarian workers, who are often exposed to severe stress.

WHO is tasked with providing technical support, facilitating inter-agency coordination, enhancing capacity building, and ensuring mental health and psychosocial support integration into emergency preparedness and response frameworks.

Progress will be tracked with annual reports to the Health Assembly from 2025 to 2031, ensuring accountability and sustained attention to issues relating to mental health in emergencies.

### **Global partners celebrate 50 years of immunization progress**

On 28 May, WHA 77 delegates and partners participated in a special [high-level event commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Expanded Programme on Immunization \(EPI\)](#). Opening the event, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General said, “Thanks to immunization, children of today are 40% more likely to see their next birthday, than children 50 years ago. This progress results from partnerships, leaders, scientists, civil society, communities and families who have worked together to deliver on the dream of immunization for all.”

The event featured generations of immunization leaders: H.E. Budi Gunadi Sadikin, Minister of Health, Indonesia; Dr Tore Godal, Former Advisor to the Prime Minister, Norway and founding CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; Dr Umit Kartoglu, President & CEO, Extensio et Progressio; Dr Sania Nishtar, CEO, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance; and Ted Chaiban, Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF, among many others.

H.E. Khumbize Chiponda, Minister of Health, Malawi, shared how vaccines made a life-changing difference for her family 5 decades ago, as three of her elder siblings did not survive due to childhood illnesses.

The commemoration celebrated the estimated minimum of 154 million lives saved through EPI over the last 50 years and called for renewed political and financial commitment to prioritize, invest in and strengthen essential immunization programmes worldwide, especially to reach ‘zero-dose’ children who missed vital vaccinations.

The event also looked forward, with speakers emphasizing their vision and ambition for the next 50 years of immunization and innovation. Speakers paid tribute to John Lloyd, who was the architect of the vaccine cold chain and an unsung hero in global health, and thanked community and front-line health workers for their dedication to immunization for all.

### **Leaders highlight health as a vital investment in economies**

At a strategic roundtable, delegates from Member States, partners and experts from health and financial sectors, put forth bold new ideas and initiatives, positioning health as a shared responsibility and investment of all sectors and the central goal of economies.

Progress towards [universal health coverage](#) (UHC) has been hampered by insufficient public financing to fund national health plans. Governments, investment banks and other actors are now initiating innovative solutions, not only to bridge short-term gaps, but also to ensure sustainability in health financing.

Thomas Östros, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank, said that a [Health Impact Investment Platform](#) has been established to enable multilateral development banks to coordinate an approach to catalytically invest in [primary health care](#) in low- and middle-income countries.

Professor Mariana Mazzucato, Chair of the WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All, reiterated that conditions impacting health and well-being are influenced by [economic and social factors](#). Dr Akmaral Alnazarova, Minister of Healthcare, Kazakhstan, shared that an international coalition for UHC is planned, emphasizing the need for reorientation of health systems towards a fully financed primary health care approach to achieve UHC.

Dr Githinji Gitahi, Group Chief Executive Officer of Amref Health Africa, highlighted that steps are being taken to better align health systems financing by global health initiatives, such as GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Global Fund, with national priorities, advancing the aims of the 'Lusaka agenda'.

Japan's Health Vice Minister and Chief Medical Officer, Dr Masami Sakoi, announced that the Japanese Government will work with WHO and World Bank to establish a new UHC Knowledge Hub in Tokyo in 2025 to help countries strengthen coordination between health and finance sectors.

**Source & Image Credit:** [WHO](#)

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