



Statement of Ireland

78th World Health Assembly

Item 17.1

WHO's work in health emergencies

21st May 2025

**Chair,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,**

Ireland aligns with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.

Globally, humanitarian crises are increasingly complex and protracted. The climate crisis continues to devastate lives and livelihoods, while conflict, disease outbreaks, and economic shocks are driving humanitarian need globally.

We are acutely concerned by drastic reductions in the volume of official development assistance and are deeply concerned at the very real impact this is having on health and well-being.

During humanitarian crises, protecting and securing health is often the first priority. Yet the very events that drive need also undermine capacities to provide care, leaving populations at grave risk.

We know that women and children, are disproportionately impacted, including through increased risk of sexual and gender based violence and forced displacement. More than 60% of *preventable* maternal deaths take place in fragile and crises settings.

Ireland condemns attacks on health and reiterates the call for full adherence to International Humanitarian Law by all parties to a conflict. Citizens must not be attacked. This includes health care workers. I pay special tribute today to the health workers who have lost their lives while working to provide care for others. In Ukraine, conflict has had a devastating toll on civilian infrastructure. The breakdown of health systems in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Sudan, and elsewhere is deeply distressing. We continue to witness extreme suffering in Gaza. We know what the absence of food, clean water, and health care does to the health and well-being of a population.

Partnering with the WHO is an expression of solidarity with crisis affected communities and a demonstration of our commitment to the right to health for all.

Ireland is proud to support the WHO's humanitarian function through unearmarked contributions, and flexible, predictable support for the Contingency Fund for Emergencies.

We commend the WHO for its brave reform and re-prioritisation process, including the Health Emergencies programme.

We congratulate the Secretariat, the Intergovernmental Negotiation Body and Member States on the outcome of the Pandemic Agreement process. Ireland is fully committed to strengthening our national capacities, including through the application of the One Health approach for the prevention, preparedness and response to health emergencies.

Let me conclude by extending Ireland's deep gratitude to WHO leadership [if appropriate, name check Dr Ryan] for the exceptional and outstanding commitment to the protection of health, and keeping the needs of the furthest behind at the heart of our efforts. We remain fully supportive of the WHO, and the protection of health and well being, especially for those in crisis.

Thank you