



Statement of Ireland

79th World Health Assembly

Item 14.1

WHO's work in health emergencies

19 May 2026

Chair,

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. Climate change, escalating conflict and reduced levels of ODA are driving urgent health needs and threaten to reverse decades of progress on health and food security, and undermine the basis for economic growth and stability.

We know that women and children are disproportionately impacted by humanitarian crises, not least given the 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. The WHO's work to sustain health services and reinforce supply chains is life-saving and a profoundly important expression of global solidarity.

Ireland commends the WHO's surveillance effort and success in co-ordinating and responding effectively to multiple concurrent emergencies. We welcome in particular the effort to protect the health of some of the world's most marginalised and at-risk communities including conflict affected communities in Sudan and Palestine.

Ireland condemns all attacks on hospitals, health-care personnel, patients and medical transport in situations of armed conflicts, as well as any misuse of hospitals for military purposes and reiterates the call for full adherence to International Humanitarian Law by all parties to a conflict.

We take note of the WHO's Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care, as an essential tool for monitoring attacks on health and generating evidence for prevention, protection and accountability.

Against a back-drop of rising need and shrinking resources, Ireland applauds the WHO for its brave and on-going reform and re-prioritisation effort, including the Health Emergencies Programme.

Together with the WHO secretariat, and as WHO member states, we must collectively work to ensure our national and our global health systems are adequately resourced, are more resilient, and better able to prevent, prepare for and respond to urgent health needs.

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

Let me conclude by extending Ireland's continued gratitude to WHO leadership for the exceptional and outstanding commitment to the protection of health, and prioritising the needs of the furthest behind in the effort to secure health equity

and health security for all. We remain fully supportive of the WHO, and the protection of health and well-being, especially for those in crisis.

Thank you