

156th session of the WHO Executive Board, 3-11 February 2025
WHO headquarters, Geneva

Constituency Statement

Agenda Item:

Pillar 1: One billion more people benefiting from universal health coverage.

6. Universal health coverage

Primary Healthcare

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International Medical Imaging and Medical Devices Community Support for a WHA Resolution on Strengthening Medical Imaging Capacity

The statement is supported by the following Non-State Actors:

- WFNMB (World Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology)
- ISR (International Society of Radiology)
- DITTA (Global Diagnostic Imaging Healthcare IT and Radiation Therapy Trade Association)
- Humatem
- IAPO (International Alliance of Patients' Organizations)
- IFA (International Federation on Ageing)
- IFMBE (International Federation for Medical and Biological Engineering)
- IFSC Ltd. (International Federation of Surgical Colleges)
- IOMP (International Organization of Medical Physics)
- ISQua (The International Society for Quality in Health Care Company Limited by Guarantee)
- ISRRT (The International Society of Radiographers and Radiological Technologists)
- MSIF (MS International Federation)
- RAD-AID International
- SIOP (The International Society of Paediatric Oncology)
- TIF (Thalassaemia International Federation)
- WFUMB (World Federation for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology)
- WMA (World Medical Association)
- WSO (World Stroke Organization)

Honorable Chair, Distinguished Delegates

Building on the WHA76.5 Resolution on Strengthening Diagnostics Capacity, the World Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology, the International Society of Radiology, the Global Diagnostic Imaging Healthcare IT and Radiation Therapy Trade Association, Humatem, the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations, the International Federation on Ageing, the International Federation for Medical and Biological Engineering, the International Federation of Surgical Colleges, the International Organization of Medical Physics, The International Society for Quality in Health Care, The International Society of

Radiographers and Radiological Technologists, the MS International Federation, RAD-AID International, The International Society of Paediatric Oncology, the Thalassaemia International Federation, the World Federation for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology, the World Medical Association and the World Stroke Organization fully support the adoption of this resolution to increase equitable and timely access to medical imaging capacity in low—and middle-income countries (LMICs) through a comprehensive health system approach.¹

Medical imaging is vital for the diagnosis of numerous communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular diseases, neurologic diseases and cancer. While the burden of NCDs is rising and disproportionately affecting LMICs, access to medical imaging, including nuclear medicine, in LMICs is severely limited even though imaging technologies are included in WHO Priority Medical Devices lists.

Medical imaging is also essential for selecting appropriate therapy and planning radiotherapy and other treatments. Interventional radiology can minimize invasive treatments, and theranostics are emerging as essential treatments for cancer. Stroke is the second leading cause of NCD mortality and requires access to medical imaging for provision of essential medical care. Medical imaging also supports the diagnosis of traumatic injuries, e.g., in conflict zones, and monitors health during pregnancy and its complications. New medical imaging technologies are available for point-of-care use, with lower costs and better image quality than decades ago.

The Lancet Oncology Commissions on Medical Imaging and Nuclear Medicine, Cancer in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Radiotherapy and Theranostics have shown the health and economic benefits of improving access to medical imaging and nuclear medicine for cancer.

Timely and equitable access to medical imaging, including nuclear medicine, should be an essential component of the WHO primary health care (PHC) and universal health coverage (UHC) initiatives.

We call on WHO, closely coordinating with the IAEA, and Member States, to develop and implement strategies for introducing and maintaining appropriate imaging equipment, workforce training, radiation safety, and quality assurance systems at the national level complementary to those required for in-vitro diagnostics and other diagnostic clinical procedures and to agree on the provision of needed budgetary support to improve access to medical imaging in cooperation with international development banks and international donor organisations.

The proposed World Health Assembly resolution will guide the collaborative effort needed to strengthen medical imaging capacity worldwide, both now and in the long term.

The imaging professionals and medical technology community is well positioned and ready to support the implementation of the resolution.

¹ https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA76/A76_R5-en.pdf