Meeting:
148th session of the Executive Board
Pillar 2: One billion more people better protected from health emergencies
Mental health preparedness and response for the COVID-19 pandemic
Statement

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) representing 550,000 family doctors in 150 countries.

WONCA welcomes the Director General Report on **Mental health preparedness and response for the COVID-19 pandemic.**

The report is strong, noting the increased vulnerability of many people to mental health problems as a result of the pandemic, and the crucial importance of expanding effective mental health care during the pandemic and beyond.

Family doctors will continue to have a central role to play in delivering and coordinating primary mental health care, and in advocating for increased integration with between specialist and community-based services.

It will also be important to ensure that family doctors, like all other frontline workers, have the support they need to manage their own health and wellbeing during these difficult times.

Missing from the WHO report is any reference to long-COVID, a combination of physical and psychological symptoms affecting perhaps 10% of COVID patients: this is a problem for which family doctors are well-placed to offer support and guidance.

In addition, it is important to note that safe environment should be universally available to all peoples, and all members of the healthcare team.