



New Year Message from the President, World Medical Association

Let me begin by congratulating you all on your achievements and successes this year. My special thanks to the Secretariat for all the ways they continue to support the WMA.

As we move into the New Year, as physicians, we must continue to play our role in advocating for the right to health for the communities we serve and especially the most disadvantaged. Regardless where we live, there are those among us who do not have access to quality health and health care. We have a responsibility to play the advocacy roles required to ensure that our health systems are strengthened enough to achieve universal health coverage. An important area for advocacy is the conditions under which people are born, grow up, live and work also known as the Social Determinants of Health.

The basic principles underlying medical ethics continue to be compassion, competence and professional autonomy. Every physician therefore must become involved in advocating for quality medical education, the highest possible ethical standards and evidence based care. As we end the New Year, our hearts go out to those physicians working in countries like Syria, Somalia, Israel, Palestine, Turkey and others who struggle to ensure access to healthcare in such difficult circumstances, at times risking their lives and those of their families.

In this regard, the WMA is partnering with others in the Health Care in Danger Project of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)'s to advocate for protection of health facilities and health workers in areas of armed conflict and other emergencies.

As physicians and NMAs, we must become part of this community of concern. We must ensure we adhere to our ethical principles, document and report incidents, support our colleagues whose lives are threatened and to work with others in ensuring that health facilities, ambulances and health workers are protected in cases of armed conflict and other emergencies.

The WMA will continue to play its role of advocating for the right of physicians to exercise their professional autonomy and the right to provide the quality of health care that their patients and communities require.

Finally, as we end the year, I wish you and your families an enjoyable holiday season and a new year 2014 full of good health and success.

Dr. Margaret Mungherera
President, World Medical Association

