

17 June 2021

Excellency,

I have the honour to inform you that I received the attached letters dated 15 June and 16 June 2021 from the Permanent Representatives of Brazil, Georgia, Japan, Republic of South Africa, Thailand and Turkey to the United Nations, in which they request the holding of an informal meeting of the General Assembly to announce the launch of the “Joint Statement in support of the International Year of Health and Care Workers”, which is currently co-sponsored by 121 delegations.

In this regard, I intend to convene an informal meeting of the General Assembly on Tuesday, 22 June, from 3 to 4:30 p.m., in the General Assembly Hall, UN Headquarters. It will be an open meeting and webcast live on UN Web TV.

I encourage all delegations to participate in this meeting. Please note that there will be no pre-determined list of speakers and, due to the limited time available for the meeting, delegations are encouraged to present regional and other group statements of up to three minutes.

The text of the joint statement, which will be issued as General Assembly document A/75/928, is also attached to this letter.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Volkan BOZKIR

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York



15 June 2021

Excellencies,

On behalf of the Permanent Missions of Brazil, Georgia, Japan, South Africa, Thailand and Turkey to the United Nations in New York, we have the honor to present the attached “Joint Statement in support of the International Year of Health and Care Workers” which is co-sponsored by 121 signatories to date.

We recognize the efforts made by health workers in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic through measures to protect the health, safety and well-being of people and express our support to all continuous work emphasizing the importance of providing all health and care workers with the necessary protection and support.

In this connection, we would kindly request that the enclosed statement, together with the complete list of co-sponsors be issued as a document of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, under agenda 131: Global health and foreign policy.

Please accept, Excellencies, the assurances of our highest consideration.

**H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres**  
**Secretary-General of the United Nations**

**H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkır**  
**President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**



Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey to the United Nations  
Ambassador Feridun Hadi Sinirlioğlu



Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations  
Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho



Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations  
Ambassador Kaha Imnadze



Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations  
Ambassador Kimihiro Ishikane



Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations  
Ambassador Mathu Joyini



Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations  
Ambassador Vitavas Srivihok

## **Joint statement in support of the International Year of Health and Care Workers**

1. We recognize that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is one of the greatest global challenges in the history of the United Nations, and note with deep concern its impact on health and the loss of life, mental health and well-being.
2. We reaffirm our solidarity with all people and countries affected by the pandemic, and condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims of COVID-19 and those whose lives and livelihoods have been affected by the pandemic.
3. We recall resolutions 74/270 of 2 April 2020, entitled “Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)”, 74/274 of 20 April 2020, entitled “International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19”, 74/306 of 15 September 2020, entitled “Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic” and World Health Assembly resolution 73.1 of 19 May 2020, entitled “COVID-19 response”.
4. We recall World Health Assembly resolutions 63.16 of 17-21 May 2010, entitled “WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel” and 69.19 of 23–28 May 2016, entitled “Global strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030”.
5. We recall the decision of the Seventy-third World Health Assembly to designate 2021 as the International Year of Health and Care Workers.
6. We recognize the primary responsibility of Governments to adopt and implement responses to the COVID-19 pandemic that are specific to their national context.
7. We acknowledge the critical role of and efforts made by health workers, in particular women health workers, health workers with disabilities and other front-line and essential workers, including humanitarian personnel, in addressing the pandemic through measures to protect the health, safety and well-being of people, and emphasizing the importance of providing all health and other essential workers with the necessary protection and support.
8. We note that women make up 70 percent of the global health workforce and are more likely to be front-line health workers and emphasize the importance of providing them with the necessary protection and support, while giving special attention to their health, psychosocial needs and work environment.
9. We recognize the heroic efforts of young health care workers, first responders and essential workers, paid or volunteer and commend them for their outstanding selfless service during the COVID-19 pandemic and also their efforts to mitigate its overall economic, social, educational and psychological impact.
10. We are concerned with the pandemic’s impact on the physical, mental and social wellbeing of health and care workers, including reported infections and deaths from the coronavirus disease.

11. We are also deeply concerned that the world's health and care workers are experiencing anxiety, distress, fatigue, occupational burnout, stigma and physical and psychological violence.

12. We recognize health and care worker safety as a priority for patient safety and urge countries to build appropriate working environments that optimize the delivery of safe health services.

13. We acknowledge the necessity to enhance the protection of and prevent acts of violence against, health care workers including in conflict zones, and to better ensure accountability for violations, in accordance with international humanitarian law, where applicable.

14. We recall resolution 71/159 of 15 December 2016, entitled "Global health and foreign policy: health employment and economic growth", and the concern, prior to the pandemic, on the global mismatch between the supply, need, demand and distribution of health workers and the estimated shortfall of 18 million health workers, primarily in low- and lower-middle income countries.

15. We are concerned with the severe shortage of health and care personnel in many countries, in particular developing countries, which constitute a major threat to the performance of health systems and therefore stress the importance of ethical international recruitment of health personnel, in accordance with the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel.

16. We recall the United Nations Secretary-General's October 2020 policy brief entitled "COVID-19 and universal health coverage" which emphasized the role of universal health coverage and provided key recommendations on how countries can build more resilience and preparedness to cope with future crises.

17. We recognize the vital role of the health and care workforce in building the resilience of communities and health systems and urge countries to create an enabling work environment to optimize the capacity of the health and care workforce, including for the achievement of universal health coverage and the preparedness to respond to future health emergencies.

18. We note the 2021 Financing for Sustainable Development Report of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development's recommendation to prioritize investments in health, human capital and social protection, with international support to help the poorest countries, as the global community works towards rebuilding better.

19. We urge Member States to prioritize investments in resilient health infrastructure and health systems aligned with the 2030 Agenda in the development and implementation of COVID-19 recovery plans, in particular on the education and employment of a sustainable health and care workforce that is responsive to population needs, universal health coverage and future preparedness and response capacities, and call on Multilateral Development Banks and International Financing Institutions to provide appropriate support.

20. We invite Member States and all relevant stakeholders to support the International Year of Health and Care Workers, aligning with the year's theme: *Protect. Invest. Together.*

21. We call upon Member States and all relevant stakeholders to ensure that our health and care workforces are fully protected, motivated, and equipped to deliver health care at all times in particular health and care workers at the forefront of the pandemic response who must be offered priority access to vaccination against COVID-19.

22. We reaffirm the appeal by the United Nations Secretary-General for countries to put mental health front and center of their responses to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, including the mental health and well-being of health and care workers.

23. We strongly encourage Member States and the World Health Organization, with relevant stakeholders as needed, to continue to work together towards a global health and care worker compact to protect those health and care workers who have protected us during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**List of Co-sponsors**  
**Joint Statement in support of the International Year of Health and Care Workers**

1. Afghanistan	32. Egypt	63. Latvia	94. Russian Federation
2. Albania	33. El Salvador	64. Lebanon	95. San Marino
3. Algeria	34. Estonia	65. Lithuania	96. Saudi Arabia
4. Andorra	35. European Union	66. Luxembourg	97. Senegal
5. Angola	36. Finland	67. Madagascar	98. Serbia
6. Austria	37. France	68. Malawi	99. Slovakia
7. Australia	38. Germany	69. Malaysia	100. Slovenia
8. Azerbaijan	39. Georgia	70. Maldives	101. Somalia
9. Bahrain	40. Ghana	71. Malta	102. South Africa
10. Bangladesh	41. Greece	72. Mauritania	103. Spain
11. Belgium	42. Guatemala	73. Mauritius	104. Sri Lanka
12. Bolivia	43. Guinea	74. Moldova	105. St. Kitts and Nevis
13. Bosnia and Herzegovina	44. Guyana	75. Mongolia	106. Sweden
14. Botswana	45. Hungary	76. Montenegro	107. Tanzania
15. Brazil	46. Iceland	77. Morocco	108. Thailand
16. Brunei Darussalam	47. India	78. Nepal	109. Togo
17. Bulgaria	48. Indonesia	79. Netherlands	110. Trinidad and Tobago
18. Burkina Faso	49. Iran	80. New Zealand	111. Tunisia
19. Cambodia	50. Iraq	81. Nigeria	112. Turkey
20. Canada	51. Ireland	82. North Macedonia	113. Turkmenistan
21. Czech Republic	52. Israel	83. Norway	114. Tuvalu
22. Chile	53. Italy	84. Oman	115. Ukraine
23. China	54. Jamaica	85. Pakistan	116. United Arab Emirates
24. Colombia	55. Japan	86. Paraguay	117. United Kingdom
25. Costa Rica	56. Jordan	87. Peru	118. Venezuela
26. Croatia	57. Kazakhstan	88. Philippines	119. Viet Nam
27. Cuba	58. Kenya	89. Poland	120. Zambia
28. Cyprus	59. Kiribati	90. Portugal	121. Zimbabwe
29. Denmark	60. Kyrgyzstan	91. Qatar	
30. Djibouti	61. Kuwait	92. Republic of Korea	
31. Dominican Republic	62. Lao PDR	93. Romania	



16 June 2021

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the Permanent Missions of Brazil, Georgia, Japan, South Africa, Thailand and Turkey to the United Nations in New York and with reference to our letter dated 15 June 2021, presenting the attached “Joint Statement in support of the International Year of Health and Care Workers” which is co-sponsored by 121 signatories, we would kindly request your Excellency to convene an informal meeting of the General Assembly, at your earliest convenience, in order to announce the launch of the mentioned joint statement.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

**H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkır**  
**President of the 75th Session of the**  
**United Nations General Assembly**





Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey to the United Nations  
Ambassador Feridun Hadi Sinirlioğlu



Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations  
Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho



Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations  
Ambassador Kaha Imnadze



Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations  
Ambassador Kimihiro Ishikane



Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations  
Ambassador Mathu Joyini



Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations  
Ambassador Vitavas Srivihok

## **Joint statement in support of the International Year of Health and Care Workers**

1. We recognize that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is one of the greatest global challenges in the history of the United Nations, and note with deep concern its impact on health and the loss of life, mental health and well-being.
2. We reaffirm our solidarity with all people and countries affected by the pandemic, and condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims of COVID-19 and those whose lives and livelihoods have been affected by the pandemic.
3. We recall resolutions 74/270 of 2 April 2020, entitled “Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)”, 74/274 of 20 April 2020, entitled “International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19”, 74/306 of 15 September 2020, entitled “Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic” and World Health Assembly resolution 73.1 of 19 May 2020, entitled “COVID-19 response”.
4. We recall World Health Assembly resolutions 63.16 of 17-21 May 2010, entitled “WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel” and 69.19 of 23–28 May 2016, entitled “Global strategy on human resources for health: workforce 2030”.
5. We recall the decision of the Seventy-third World Health Assembly to designate 2021 as the International Year of Health and Care Workers.
6. We recognize the primary responsibility of Governments to adopt and implement responses to the COVID-19 pandemic that are specific to their national context.
7. We acknowledge the critical role of and efforts made by health workers, in particular women health workers, health workers with disabilities and other front-line and essential workers, including humanitarian personnel, in addressing the pandemic through measures to protect the health, safety and well-being of people, and emphasizing the importance of providing all health and other essential workers with the necessary protection and support.
8. We note that women make up 70 percent of the global health workforce and are more likely to be front-line health workers and emphasize the importance of providing them with the necessary protection and support, while giving special attention to their health, psychosocial needs and work environment.
9. We recognize the heroic efforts of young health care workers, first responders and essential workers, paid or volunteer and commend them for their outstanding selfless service during the COVID-19 pandemic and also their efforts to mitigate its overall economic, social, educational and psychological impact.
10. We are concerned with the pandemic’s impact on the physical, mental and social wellbeing of health and care workers, including reported infections and deaths from the coronavirus disease.

11. We are also deeply concerned that the world's health and care workers are experiencing anxiety, distress, fatigue, occupational burnout, stigma and physical and psychological violence.

12. We recognize health and care worker safety as a priority for patient safety and urge countries to build appropriate working environments that optimize the delivery of safe health services.

13. We acknowledge the necessity to enhance the protection of and prevent acts of violence against, health care workers including in conflict zones, and to better ensure accountability for violations, in accordance with international humanitarian law, where applicable.

14. We recall resolution 71/159 of 15 December 2016, entitled "Global health and foreign policy: health employment and economic growth", and the concern, prior to the pandemic, on the global mismatch between the supply, need, demand and distribution of health workers and the estimated shortfall of 18 million health workers, primarily in low- and lower-middle income countries.

15. We are concerned with the severe shortage of health and care personnel in many countries, in particular developing countries, which constitute a major threat to the performance of health systems and therefore stress the importance of ethical international recruitment of health personnel, in accordance with the WHO Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel.

16. We recall the United Nations Secretary-General's October 2020 policy brief entitled "COVID-19 and universal health coverage" which emphasized the role of universal health coverage and provided key recommendations on how countries can build more resilience and preparedness to cope with future crises.

17. We recognize the vital role of the health and care workforce in building the resilience of communities and health systems and urge countries to create an enabling work environment to optimize the capacity of the health and care workforce, including for the achievement of universal health coverage and the preparedness to respond to future health emergencies.

18. We note the 2021 Financing for Sustainable Development Report of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development's recommendation to prioritize investments in health, human capital and social protection, with international support to help the poorest countries, as the global community works towards rebuilding better.

19. We urge Member States to prioritize investments in resilient health infrastructure and health systems aligned with the 2030 Agenda in the development and implementation of COVID-19 recovery plans, in particular on the education and employment of a sustainable health and care workforce that is responsive to population needs, universal health coverage and future preparedness and response capacities, and call on Multilateral Development Banks and International Financing Institutions to provide appropriate support.

20. We invite Member States and all relevant stakeholders to support the International Year of Health and Care Workers, aligning with the year's theme: *Protect. Invest. Together.*

21. We call upon Member States and all relevant stakeholders to ensure that our health and care workforces are fully protected, motivated, and equipped to deliver health care at all times in particular health and care workers at the forefront of the pandemic response who must be offered priority access to vaccination against COVID-19.

22. We reaffirm the appeal by the United Nations Secretary-General for countries to put mental health front and center of their responses to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, including the mental health and well-being of health and care workers.

23. We strongly encourage Member States and the World Health Organization, with relevant stakeholders as needed, to continue to work together towards a global health and care worker compact to protect those health and care workers who have protected us during the COVID-19 pandemic.