

73rd World Health Assembly – 18 May 2020**Statement of the World Heart Federation, Supported by the Global Coalition for Circulatory Health**

The World Heart Federation, supported by the Global Coalition for Circulatory Health, applauds WHO's relentless commitment to science, solutions, and solidarity in fighting this viral storm. Heads of State, policy makers, and civil society must unite in their support for WHO's crucial leading role.

The COVID-19 pandemic has left no country unscathed; health systems face challenges on multiple fronts. Nurses, doctors and healthcare workers, our Members, are at the frontlines of an enormous struggle. We recognize the impact that COVID-19 is having on patients with circulatory diseases and leading to thrombotic events such as pulmonary embolus and stroke. Patients with pre-existing conditions like hypertension, diabetes, and kidney disease are at higher risk of complications and death from this virus. Emerging evidence indicates that people living with NCDs have sought and received too little medical attention during the pandemic, leading to avoidable disability and death. As leaders of the global circulatory community, it is our job to help healthcare workers contain the disease and treat those who have contracted COVID-19 as effectively as possible.

Thus far, the epicenter of the virus has been in powerful economies, and even there, deep inequalities in access to healthcare have been revealed. We believe that science must lead all responses to this pandemic and that is why we, as a Global Coalition, are united in our efforts to better understand through scientific enquiry the health impact of this infection and how these can be mitigated through policies to save lives. This pandemic presents an opportunity to reimagine stronger, more integrated healthcare systems.

We applaud the Resolution and its references to pre-existing conditions and call on Member States to fund research and focused responses to the relationship between COVID-19 and NCDs, especially circulatory conditions. We need leadership in global health now more than ever. Only together can we overcome this pandemic.

