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# International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care Inc.

## **Meeting:**

Seventy-second World Health Assembly (A72/1)

## **Agenda Item:**

- WHO's work in health emergencies

## **Statement:**

"Humanitarian emergencies and crises are large-scale events that may result in the breakdown of health care systems and society, forced displacement, death, and physical, psychological, social and spiritual suffering on a massive scale. Current responses to Humanitarian emergencies and crises rightfully focus on saving lives, but for both ethical and medical reasons, the prevention and relief of pain, as well as other physical and psychological symptoms, social and spiritual distress, also are imperative. Therefore, palliative care, should be integrated into responses to Humanitarian emergencies and crises. The principles of humanitarianism and impartiality require that all patients receive care and should never be abandoned for any reason, even if they are dying. Thus, there is significant overlap in the principles and mission of palliative care and humanitarianism: relief of suffering; respect for the dignity of all people; support for basic needs; and accompaniment during the most difficult of times." These are not our words, but those of WHO ADG, Dr. Naoko Yamamoto in the recently released WHO Guide on Palliative Care in Humanitarian Emergencies. We urge member states to refer to this Guide, to facilitate the training of emergency workers in the use of controlled medicines, and to work with the International Narcotics Control Board to ensure that essential palliative care medicines such as morphine are available in refugee camps.

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