Announcing World Patient Safety Day 2020

World Patient Safety Day was established by the 72nd World Health Assembly, in May 2019, with the adoption of resolution WHA72.6 on 'Global action on patient safety', and an endorsement for the Day to be marked annually on 17 September. The overall objectives of World Patient Safety Day are to enhance global understanding of patient safety, increase public engagement in the safety of health care and promote global actions to enhance patient safety and reduce patient harm. World Patient Safety Day builds on a series of successful annual Global Ministerial Summits on Patient Safety, which started in London in 2016. The origin of the Day is firmly grounded in the fundamental principle of medicine – First, do no harm.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest challenge and threat which the entire world and the humanity is facing today, and health care is living its greatest crisis in patient safety ever! The pandemic has exerted unprecedented pressure on health systems worldwide. Health systems can only function with health workers; and a knowledgeable, skilled and motivated health workforce is critical for provision of safe care to patients. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the huge challenges health workers are facing globally. Working in stressful environments exacerbates safety risks for health workers, including being infected and contributing to outbreaks in the health care facility, limited access or adherence to personal protective equipment and other infection prevention and control measures, and inducing errors which can potentially harm patients and health workers. In many countries, health workers are facing increased risks of infections, violence, accidents, stigma, illness and death.

The objective of World Patient Safety Day 2020 is to raise global awareness about the importance of health worker safety and the need for a holistic approach to patient safety. **Health Worker Safety: A Priority for Patient Safety** has, therefore, been selected as the theme for World Patient Safety Day 2020, which focuses on the interrelationship between health worker safety and patient safety, depicted in the slogan **'Safe Health Workers, Safe Patients'**. This emphasizes the need for a safe working environment for health workers as a prerequisite for ensuring patient safety. Along with this slogan, WHO is proposing a call for action, **"Speak Up for Health Worker Safety**!"**, which requests urgent and sustainable actions by all stakeholders to recognize and invest in the safety of health workers, as a priority for patient safety. The year 2020 is also the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, and the theme of World Patient Safety Day 2020 is very much aligned with its objectives.

Working together for World Patient Safety Day 2020

The global campaign for World Patient Safety Day 2020 proposes a wide range of activities for all key stakeholders. National governments, international organizations, professional associations, academic institutions, civil society organizations and health care facilities are encouraged to adapt and develop national and local campaigns. The signature mark of the global campaign is to **light up iconic monuments**, **landmarks, and public places in the colour orange**, in collaboration with local authorities. This will also be a gesture of respect and gratitude to all health workers.

We encourage you to share short videos (60 seconds) on the theme of *Health Worker Safety: A Priority for Patient Safety*, which can be used in the run-up to and on World Patient Safety Day itself.

During these unprecedented times, a combination of virtual and other activities is being planned by WHO to commemorate the Day. More information on this will be available on the campaign web page shortly. In the meantime, we kindly ask you to share information about your activities, events and celebrations for World Patient Safety Day 2020. During these events, please consider taking photographs and preparing a short summary, for inclusion in the WHO report "World Patient Safety Day 2020: Stories from around the world".

For more information about the campaign please visit https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2020/09/17/default-calendar/world-patient-safety-day-2020. For further information, please contact us at patientsafety@who.int.