

**Minister of Health and Medical Education
of the Islamic Republic of Iran
79th World Health Assembly – Geneva, May 2026**

Mr. President,
Director-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

The theme of the 79th World Health Assembly – "Reshaping global health: A shared responsibility" – is a powerful reminder that protecting health is a collective duty, particularly in times of conflict under deliberate attack.

Today, I stand in front of you as the health minister of a nation whose people, children, and health infrastructure are under active attack.

Just weeks ago, a school in Minab was struck. 168 children sitting at their desks and their teachers were killed at their school. These were not combatants; they were children with dreams.

The numbers are horrifying: 376 under 18 years are killed and many civilians are injured, a clear evidence of indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets.

63 hospitals, and 195 other health related infrastructures are damaged leaving 27 health care providers killed.

Let us recall the words of the WHO Director-General himself, **Dr Tedros**: "Bombing a hospital or a school is not a 'miscalculation.' These are war crimes. Full stop."

And let me be clear: the Pasteur Institute of Iran – a pillar of our country's health system for over 100 years – has been directly hit. This historic institution, a WHO collaborating center, a symbol of science and health, has suffered severe damage. Its laboratories and vaccine production lines are disrupted, as published in a correspondence in The Lancet May 8, 2026.

Excellencies, attacking a school or hospitals, is attacking the future and ethics fundamental.

Iran calls upon this Assembly to:

- first, condemn attacks on civilians and civilian health infrastructure;
- second, support urgent environmental health assessments for affected regions;
- and third, protect remaining health and scientific facilities as safe havens.

Yet, despite all these attacks, our health system continues to function with pride, hospitals remain open, health workers continue their shifts and vaccination campaigns continue. We will not be broken and our "National Team of Health" stands with the people of Iran in any condition.

Iran has been a member of this organization since its founding in 1948. We have contributed to global health for nearly eight decades. What we ask today is accountability.

Health can and must remain a bridge for peace. Iran has been a member of this Organization since 1948. In that time, we have survived revolution, an eight-year war, sanctions, and pandemic. After all, The Islamic Republic of Iran remains

committed to universal health coverage, emergency preparedness, and health for all.

Thank you.