

ARCHIVED: WMA DECLARATION ON CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Adopted by the 42nd World Medical Assembly Rancho Mirage, CA., USA, October 1990 and rescinded at the WMA General Assembly, Santiago 2005

The World Medical Association draws the attention of the medical profession throughout the world to the dangers presented by chemical and biological weapons. Among other, more obvious, dangers, it should be noted:

- a. The use of such weapons would have a devastating effect on civilian populations in addition to military personnel, and not only in the target area but also in distant places, perhaps beyond the national boundaries of the combatants.
- b. The effects of exposure to chemical and biological weapons present a continuing threat to the health of human beings on a long term basis, possibly causing illness, injury, disease and defects in the population over a long period of time.
- c. The effects of exposure to chemical and biological weapons may also result in permanent, complex and unpredictable changes in the natural environment, including animals, plant life and water supply, thus destroying the food source of human beings and resulting in extensive morbidity.
- d. Existing health care services, technology and manpower may be helpless to relieve the suffering caused by exposure to chemical and biological weapons.

The World Medical Association Declaration of Geneva asks physicians to consecrate their lives to the service of humanity, to pledge that the health of the patient will be the physician's first consideration, and that the physician will not use medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity.

The World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki states that it is the mission of the physician to safeguard the health of the people. The physician's knowledge and conscience are dedicated to the fulfillment of this mission.

The World Medical Association Declaration of Tokyo begins with the following statement:

"It is the privilege of the medical doctor to practice medicine in the service of humanity, to preserve and restore bodily and mental health without distinction as to persons, to comfort and ease the suffering of his or her patients. The utmost respect for human life is to be maintained even under threat, and no use made of any medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity."

Therefore, the World Medical Association considers that it would be unethical for the physician, whose mission is to provide health care, to participate in the research and development of chemical and biological weapons, and to use his or her personal and scientific knowledge in the conception and manufacture of such weapons.

Furthermore, the World Medical Association:

1. Condemns the development and use of chemical and biological weapons.
2. Asks all governments to refrain from the development and use of chemical and biological weapons.
3. Asks all National Medical Associations to join WMA in actively supporting this Declaration.

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