



WFSA
WORLD FEDERATION OF SOCIETIES OF
ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS

WFSA Statement - Agenda Item 5c, Wednesday 16 September - "Health Systems Strengthening."

In May 2015, the WFSA, representing hundreds of thousands of anaesthesiologists in over 140 countries around the world, gave its unequivocal support to the World Health Assembly Resolution A68/31 on strengthening the provision of safe anaesthesia and essential surgery as a component of universal health coverage. The resolution was passed and the needs of the 5 billion people who do not have access to safe, affordable surgical and anaesthesia care came a step closer to being met with that historic decision.

Of course much of this need is in Africa or Asia, in the world's poorest countries, but we would be wrong to assume that surgery and anaesthesia are available to all within Europe at prices that are affordable and at international standards. The Lancet Commission estimates that in Central Europe, some 680,000 people need surgery but are not able to access the care that they need. This is probably a conservative figure and does little to expose the inequity and poverty that can be found on our doorsteps.

As an organisation that has set the International Standards for a Safe Provision of Anaesthesia and which, along with the European Society of Anaesthesiology (ESA) and others, delivers the guidance, education and training to meet those standards, WFSA believes in scaling up its efforts around the world to produce tangible results in a short time scale. We can address the combined elements of workforce, drugs, equipment and infrastructure that not only ensure a safe provision of anaesthesia as stated in the Helsinki Declaration on Patient Safety in Anaesthesiology supported worldwide but contribute to strengthening health systems and improving health outcomes in a manner that is affordable, life-saving and an outstanding return on investment. We urge all present to ensure that health system strengthening in Europe includes surgery and anaesthesia as a priority area.

We applaud resolution A68/31 and seek tangible and appropriate action. WFSA together with the ESA remain ready to work with WHO and Ministers of Health, and our counterpart international surgical organisations, to improve patient care and access to safe anaesthesia in a truly dramatic fashion.