

---

**World Health Organization  
WHA 74 –May 2021**

**WHO's work in health emergencies (17.3)**

Mr. Nitzan Arny  
Counselor, Permanent Mission of Israel in Geneva

---

Thank you moderator,

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the world as we knew it has changed forever. Now more than ever in the history of public health, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration have been vital in minimizing the damage to health systems, economies, and of course the individuals affected by this virus. We learned that health emergencies can affect us all, no matter where we are from, and most importantly that we are not safe until everyone is.

We want to acknowledge the essential work of the WHO secretariat. The WHO's publishing of hundreds of COVID-19 related guidance materials have been invaluable to Israel and our partners in managing our pandemic response, and the transparent, evidenced-based information has been especially important. The dozens of Member states briefings and the press briefings on a weekly basis helped mainstream key messages and provided some sort of certainty in times of mis-information and speculations.

The State of Israel has been grateful and proud of the work we have done with the WHO in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. When countries share data and best practices, we ensure that the WHO, the leading professional organization, has the tools most needed to help guide our health systems in dealing with the pandemics of this scale.

Having said all that, member states should have been better prepared. All of us should have been better prepared. That is why It is important to ensure that we continue to strengthen the systems set up during this pandemic, including early detection, verification, and warning of novel virus strains, and data-sharing as well as reporting mechanisms. We reiterate Israel's commitment to strengthening existing tools and creating new mechanisms in order to effectively address the current and future global

challenges. The WHO serves as the center of world health, and the organization must be able to disseminate accurate information, worldwide, as soon as the data is available, to ensure maximum efficiency in dealing with any health crises in the future.

The WHO has also been integral in ensuring that not only do we not fall into pandemic fatigue, but that we also do not become too pandemic-focused. We must continue working to ensure that all essential health services are supported even during these trying times. In this regard, we want to commend the work of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, which highlighted in its recommendations the need to “empower WHO to take leading, convening and coordinating role in operational aspects of an emergency response to a pandemic.”

Thank you.