Professor Walter Ricciardi  
Vice-president/President-elect

RE: MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY IN EFFORTS TO PREVENT, CONTAIN AND MANAGE COVID-19

On behalf of the World Federation of Public Health Associations, I wish to express solidarity with the people of Italy during this incredibly stressful period of COVID-19. I also wish to express support for the efforts of the Italian Society of Hygiene, Preventive Medicine and Public Health (SITI), and the many health workers who are the vanguard against this pandemic.

We noted that the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic earlier this month. The director-general, Dr Tedros saluted Italy’s "genuine sacrifices" after the government put the country under lockdown to try to halt the spread of the novel coronavirus. We join WHO in acknowledging, supporting and encouraging Italy in these important efforts.

We are encouraged by the efforts of all organizations working in Italy in offering expert public health advice, mobilizing health workers to assist with this pandemic and in providing accurate information, education, and targeted communication on COVID-19.

We support WHO’s call that the public health community should play an active role in ensuring that we present facts, and that our actions do not generate fear, misinformation, stigma and discrimination. As the WFPHA, we believe that the experience of COVID-19 should be used to strengthen public health systems in all countries of the world. We believe that this system strengthening should be done in line with the key elements of the Federation’s Global Charter of the Public’s Health. The Charter emphasises disease prevention, health promotion and protection, through enabling governance, education and training, knowledge, information and intelligence, and advocacy for health, equity and social justice.

Please let us know whether there is anything that the WFPHA can do to assist you with your efforts to contain and control the pandemic in Italy.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

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WFPHA President

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