# 16th World Congress of Public Health

# Public health for the future of humanity: analysis, advocacy, and action

12 – 17 October 2020

Roma Convention Center La Nuvola

The **16th World Congress on Public Health 2020**, co-chaired by professors. Walter Ricciardi (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore) and Carlo Signorelli(University Vita-Salute San Raffaele of Milan) , is jointly organized by the Italian Society of Hygiene, Preventive Medicine and Public Health (SItI), the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) and the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) and will take place from October 12th  to October 17th 2020 at the Roma Convention Center "La Nuvola".

This edition of the congress aims to be a meeting and exchange point on the main issues and problems related to Hygiene, Preventive Medicine and Public Health with an international vision. The themes of the Congress reflect the firm belief that the world scientific community of Public Health has the obligation to respond to new health threats with effective policies and measures of control and prevention. The chosen title (PUBLIC HEALTH FOR THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY: ANALYSIS ADVOCACY AND ACTION) summarizes these general objectives underlining the interest both in aspects of research and policies.

The congress event, of exceptional scientific importance, is supported by a national and international Faculty composed of the leading public health experts in clinical and academic fields, which will interface with the 5000 expected participants from all over the world. It will be an opportunity for comparison during which, on the basis of new scientific knowledge, it will be possible to define the guidelines to be proposed to the Institutions for a real change in the field of Public Health.

Numerous issues relating to health promotion, food safety, epidemiology, prevention and environmental protection will follow one another in a dense six-day programme aimed at physicians, nurses, biologists, pharmacists, healthcare assistants, prevention techniciansand other professionals involved in medical management and the management of healthcare facilities.

The main topics, which will be held in the plenary sessions, are:

- What happened to the Enlightenment?

- Leading the way to a healthier world

- The Earth: a strategy for survival

- Moving out of the silos

- Making a difference

- The information revolution

- Revolutionizing the public health workforce as agents of change

- High quality health systems to ensure health and well-being

The congress will follow accreditation with the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME) for obtaining CME credits.

# Plenary Sessions: The Narrative

### 1.  What happened to the Enlightenment?

Health public policies are built on evidence and reason. Today, these principles are under attack, from politicians who see the truth as optional and by powerful vested interests using ever more sophisticated means to shape public opinion. The ability to create deepfakes, in which words are literally put into the mouths of others, or at least images of them, mean we can no longer believe our eyes. Fake news is widespread, and travels much faster than the truth. In this session we call on the public health community to recognize the threat that these developments pose and to acquire the skills necessary to combat them. How do we recognize fake news? How do we discover who is spreading it, and why? And how do we frame our messages so they don't backfire? Introduced by an investigative journalist who has done more than almost anyone else to expose the scale and nature of interference in political processes, we ask public health professionals from around the world to reflect on what we need to do.

### 2.  The Earth: A Strategy for Survival

We have now entered the Anthropocene era, where for the first time, humans are changing the earth in which we live. Our emissions of carbon dioxide are driving up global temperatures, our exploitation of the environment is destroying biodiversity, our reckless use of chemicals threatens the insects on which we depend to pollinate crops, and our irresponsible use of antibiotics is fueling the rise of antimicrobial resistance. In this session we ask people from different backgrounds how we can work together to tackle what is rapidly becoming a threat to the survival of humans and the creatures with whom we share this planet.

### 3.  Leading the way to a healthier world

The public health community worldwide is looking for leadership but too often is failing to find it. We need individuals who can inspire, motivate, and influence those who can promote health and who can confront those who undermine it. What does public health leadership look like? Where will that leadership come from? How do we create and sustain a new generation of leaders? How do we support potential leaders who face barriers based on their gender, nationality, ethnicity, or other characteristics?

### 4. The Information Revolution

Today, we carry on our persons far greater computing power that would have been imaginable even two decades ago. The information we can access can empower individuals and communities, providing knowledge that would once have been inaccessible. It offers us choices that they could never have imagined. But those who write the algorithms and who own the data have power beyond imagination. They often know more about us than we know about ourselves. This revolution in information has the potential to improve health and equity but equally to undermine it. Do we have the tools to understand these processes, especially as many of them are effectively invisible? What actions can we take to maximise the benefits and minimize the threats?

### 5. Health systems fit for the future: promoting better health, economic growth, and social cohesion

High quality, sustainable health systems are essential to enhance health and wealth and to achieve societal well-being. High quality health systems include not only the right to quality health-care but also equity. Evidence-based, cost-effective investments and rigorous assessment are key to guarantee high quality health systems. How can we improve health, wealth and societal well-being by investing in health systems? Which investments inside and beyond the health system should be performed to increase quality and reduce inequities? How can we guarantee that health systems are sustainable, resilient and accessible?

### 6. Revolutionizing the Public Health Workforce as Agents of Change

The wider public health workforce consists of professions that have the opportunity or ability to positively impact the health and wellbeing of the public through their work, and are not always employed directly in a public health role. These professions can make an impact. Appropriate education and training in public health is key to make public health workforce an agent of change from community to government. Are these professionals aware and ready for this task? How should education and training in public health be updated and integrated in the different curricula? Which professions should be educated and how? What actions should be taken to build knowledge and capacity in public health horizontally?

### 7. Moving out of the silos

We know that we need truly interdisciplinary approaches to analyse the threats to health and to evaluate the effectiveness of responses. Yet we often find difficulty in putting them into practice. Who creates the silos? And for which purpose? What actions do we need to take in the global public health community to promote and sustain interdisciplinary working? And what changes in the wider society do we need to advocate for to make this happen?

### 8. Making a difference

To paraphrase Karl Marx, the epidemiologists have described the world. Our task is to change it. We now know a great deal about the causes of disease and the distribution within populations. We also know a lot about what works on a small scale. Our problem is that we find it difficult to

scale up interventions or to change policies in ways that make a real difference a population level. What analytic tools to be need to understand the successes and failures of public health policies? What actions should we take to implement what works? And what messages are most successful in advocating for implementation?