

Call to Action

Introduction

This is a call to all Member States of the World Health Organization (WHO) Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR), Non-State Actors in Official Relations with the WHO, patient organizations, civil society alliances and faith-based organisations in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to join us in national unity and regional solidarity in addressing the cancer burden in the WHO EM Region and its challenges.

The call to action proposes that at this 76th World Health Assembly, we commit to pursue a coordinated whole of government, -society, -patient, -private sector programme of actions to promote and advance predictive, preventative, personalised, participatory, and pre-emptive cancer care in the region.

Our commitment will support us in the delivery of Universal Health Coverage 2030 to meet the Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensuring healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. This is essential to the sustainable development of the region.

Preamble

We acknowledge that for 75 years, the World Health Organization has led the world in exemplary fashion in creating a supporting ecosystem in public health through robust and successful partnerships with its 194 Member State so that everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health and well-being. No one will be left behind.¹

We reaffirm the WHO Constitution and principle that it's the right of every person, without distinction of any kind, to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

We acknowledge the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Committee and the Secretariat have employed great leadership and scientific skill to give us timely, accurate, pertinent, and culturally competent evidence and guidelines to guide our patients and health systems during one of the most challenging times during the COVID19 Pandemic. We thank the WHO EM Region Office.

We also endorse that health is a precondition for and an outcome and indicator of all 17 goals within the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

We recall and align with the 2018 Political Declaration of the 3rd High-Level Meeting of the Heads of State and Government and the UN General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases and thank WHO EM Region Member States for having made such a high-level political commitment to cancer control.

¹ WHO Constitution <https://www.who.int/about/governance/constitution>

We reaffirm the WHO Resolution *WHA70.12 Cancer prevention and control in the context of an integrated approach* and endorse that we continually need high level political commitment to foster an integrated approach to cancer control and accelerate the implementation of strategies, programmes, actions and measures in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

We recall an earlier *World Cancer Declaration 2013* urging the alignment of national programmes with the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases in which advocates, governments, UN agencies, civil society, relevant private sector and other key stakeholders should develop a shared vision upon which to build collaborative partnerships to address the global cancer burden in collaboration with other Member States, civil society organizations, patients' organizations, professional bodies, academic and research institutions, industry and other relevant stakeholders to promote, prioritise and embed cancer prevention and control in all health policies and strategies.

We endorse the WHO Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2021-30 and urge Member States to implement it in full to increase public awareness and engagement, enhance national understanding, and regional solidarity in patient safety within cancer healthcare continuum. Patient harm due to late or inaccurate diagnosis, unsafe surgery, radiation errors, medication harm, and errors in palliative care and rehabilitation cost lives and increase suffering. Member States are urged to promote patient safety in cancer care and control continuum by developing and implementing national policies, legislation, strategies, guidance, and tools, and deploy adequate resources, in order to strengthen the safety of all cancer care health services and change their culture, as appropriate.

Call to Action

We all resolve:

- To support investment in appropriate health technologies and human resource development in this once in a generation opportunity to establish predictive, preventative, personalised, participatory, and pre-emptive cancer care in the region.
- To strengthen our health systems along the whole cancer care continuum in order to facilitate predictive, preventative, personalised, and participatory for effective cancer control for all.
- To be predictive, Member States must invest in robust health informatic systems and machine learning and artificial intelligence health technologies, starting with electronic patient records and online patient registers, to measure in a timely and accurate fashion the cancer burden and impact of cancer plans in all countries. By co-production with patients, Member States can improve the accuracy, relevancy and the timeliness of cancer registries and surveillance systems.
- Reduce exposure to cancer risk factors like unhealthy (tobacco and alcohol use) and sedentary lifestyles (obesity).



- Extend reach and access to Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) and Hepatitis B (HBV) universal vaccination programmes.
- Run regular cancer awareness communication campaigns to eliminate stigma and dispel myths about cancer. Improve health literacy and reduce the infodemic on cancer control and its diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care.
- Invest in early detection and accurate diagnosis through population screening programmes and improve awareness on early signs and symptoms and boost motivation and confidence to seek advice.
- Improve access to services across the cancer care continuum diagnosis, quality and safe multidisciplinary treatment, rehabilitation, supportive and palliative care services, availability of essential medicines and technologies.
- Improve education and training of healthcare workers using innovative education and training approaches throughout the full spectrum of cancer care from prediction, prevention, personalised treatments, and participatory co-production with patients.
- Harmonise palliative care and rehabilitation programmes.