73rd Session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean

Oral/Written statement by the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO)

Agenda Item 6(a) – Advancing health financing for stronger financial protection in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: pathways to equity and resilience (EM/RC73/6; draft resolution EM/RC73/R.3(D))

Honourable Chair, distinguished delegates,

The International Alliance of Patients' Organizations speaks on behalf of 278 members across 74 countries, including in this Region. IAPO welcomes the technical paper and supports adoption of the draft resolution.

Financial protection is fundamental to equitable, people-centred universal health coverage that leaves no one behind. For the people we represent, it means obtaining the care they need, when they need it, without financial hardship.

The paper rightly recognises that health financing systems should be inclusive and participatory. However, health financing reforms should make clear how patients, people with lived experience and communities will contribute to the decisions that shape their access to care.

IAPO urges Member States and WHO to prioritise three actions.

First, social participation in financing decisions. Patients' organisations should have formal, resourced roles in priority setting, benefit-package design and the Health Financing Taskforce. Their expertise identifies the costs that push households into hardship, from medicines to long-term and mental health care.

Second, primary health care that works for people. Financing reforms should secure continuous, coordinated care close to home, affordable at the point of service, for people living with chronic conditions.

Third, accountability that reflects people's realities. Regional and national monitoring should track care forgone because of cost and people's experience of care, using indicators shaped with those who use health services.

IAPO stands ready to support this work, ensuring financial protection is designed and implemented in partnership with patients, people with lived experience and communities.

Thank you.

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