

**Statement by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) a membership organisation  
representing 159 cancer organisations across the African Region  
67<sup>th</sup> Session of the WHO Regional Committee for the African Region**

**Agenda Item 15: Regional framework for integrating essential NCD services in primary health care**

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this statement on behalf of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) a membership organisation representing 159 cancer organisations across the African Region.

First we would like to express our support for the statement made by the NCD Alliance.

Cancer is the second leading cause of mortality globally, and in AFRO alone cancer accounted for over 455,000 deaths annually by 2012<sup>1</sup>. This reflects the growing global inequity in cancer mortality as the majority (75%<sup>2</sup>) of global cancer deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, which are ill-equipped to cope with the escalating burden of the diseases. In 2010, the total annual economic cost of cancer was estimated at US\$ 1.16 trillion, threatening health budgets and economies at all income levels as well as posing potentially catastrophic financial risks to individuals and families. In light of this, UICC warmly welcomed the 2017 cancer resolution, which was championed by Member States across the African region.

Significant progress has been made regionally to lay the foundations for effective cancer control programmes. The number of countries with national cancer control plans rose from 30% to 75% between 2010 and 2015<sup>3</sup>. Now as countries move to implementation, it is critical that primary health care workers are trained on cancer basics; are able to inform communities on risk factors, signs and symptoms and expedite referral for accurate and timely diagnosis and treatment - a key role in significantly reducing the economic and health burden of cancer.

Early detection services for the regions highest impact cancers, most notably breast, cervical and childhood leukemias, are deemed 'highly cost effective' by the WHO in the updated Appendix III to the NCD Global Action Plan. As such we urge Member States to integrate these early detection services into primary health care packages to improve health literacy of African communities and improve equitable access to the opportunity for early diagnosis and successful treatment. This investment has the potential to yield rapid and significant returns economically as well as in terms of reporting against the 2025 goal and in improving the survival and wellbeing across the region.

UICC stands ready to support you in these next steps.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://gco.iarc.fr/today/fact-sheets-populations?population=991&sex=0#collapse2>

<sup>2</sup> [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA70/A70\\_32-en.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA70/A70_32-en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/246223/1/9789241565363-eng.pdf?ua=1>