



Lugano, Switzerland, 24 January 2017

RE: 140th WHO Executive Board Meeting

Agenda Item 10.5: Cancer prevention and control in the context of an integrated approach

Statement by: European Society for Medical Oncology

Statement to be made by: Dr. James Cleary or Dr. Fatima Cardoso, European Society for Medical Oncology

Dear Honorable Chairman, Dear Distinguished Guests,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO), who together with its partner societies worldwide represent physicians who treat and care for cancer patients. Together we urgently look to WHO for stronger guidance regarding cancer management that builds upon the impressive work WHO is already doing in cancer prevention, such as tobacco control. Despite substantial progress in the effectiveness in cancer treatment, only a minority of cancer patients have access to the latest treatment (medicines, surgery, and radiotherapy, either alone or in combination), with the consequence of unnecessary suffering and mortality. More than 80% of the annual 12 million new cancer patients worldwide are living in low- and middle-income countries, where care delivery systems are ill-prepared to provide adequate cure and care. Within the next decade, the cancer burden is projected to rise by 50% due to the ageing population and the spread of cancer risks. Without taking adequate measures now, the divide between patients who have a good chance to survive - because they have access to surgery, cancer medicines, and radiotherapy - and those who do not have access, will dramatically increase.

We know that there are cost-effective treatment options for most cancer types, in particular for the most frequent cancers worldwide, such as breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer. Therefore, we call upon WHO to strengthen its leadership and guidance to Member States by laying down the framework to build national health systems that assure that all cancer patients have timely access to effective treatments, medicines, medical devices, and a well-trained cancer workforce. We support the WHO's goal of universal healthcare coverage, and ask the WHO Executive Board to place a Cancer Resolution on the 2017 World Health Assembly Agenda to help WHO Member States overcome the devastating effects of cancer on the health of their citizens. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Fortunato Ciardiello, ESMO President