



**3rd High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly
on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases
27 September 2018, United Nations Headquarters, New York, New York, USA**

Distinguished Chair, Esteemed Participants,

The European Society for Medical Oncology, also known as ESMO, is the leading European professional organisation for medical oncology, with over 18,000 members from 150 countries. We are doctors who treat cancer patients, and our global network includes oncology societies around the world.

We welcome the UN Political Declaration on NCDs and the dedicated paragraph on cancer. We are ready to contribute to the Declaration's implementation through use of our expertise and knowledge on how to cost-effectively reduce the number deaths from cancer.

Regarding the financing of cancer services, we would like to raise awareness that 30 to 50% of cancer deaths can be avoided with investments in prevention, early detection, and cancer treatment.* The earlier that a cancer is detected, the less it costs to treat it.

We would like to address concerns about the affordability of cancer treatment by noting that essential medicines are affordable:

- There are 26 inexpensive generic medicines, and 2 more expensive biosimilars, on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines that are used in the treatment of 83% of adult cancers. These medicines are all recommended in the evidence-based ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines because of their high level of benefit, and some can cure cancer patients.
- Vaccines are inexpensive, easy to administer, and can prevent cancer-causing infections for cervical and liver cancers.
- Opioids that are critical to manage cancer pain are extremely inexpensive, and national legislation must ensure their availability for legitimate medical and scientific use.

The real challenge is the reimbursement of innovative expensive cancer medicines. That is why ESMO developed the [ESMO Magnitude of Clinical Benefit Scale](#) to assist governments to prioritize the reimbursement of those medicines with the highest clinical benefit for patients.

This UN High-level Meeting on NCDs provides us the unprecedented opportunity to combine our knowledge and resources to scale-up our efforts to improve and extend cancer services to millions of people who die prematurely, or in pain, because they have no access to quality cancer care. ESMO stands ready, with its expertise in cancer management, to help governments make cost-effective decisions to prolong and save as many lives as possible, and to work towards a Universal Health Coverage that leaves no one behind. Thank you.

On behalf of ESMO,
Dr. Alexandru Eniu, Romania
ESMO Board Member and Chair of the ESMO Global Policy Committee

* <http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cancer>