



## **ESMO Statement at the World Health Assembly, 21-26 May 2018**

### **Agenda Item 11.5: Addressing the global shortage of, and access to, medicines and vaccines**

Honourable Chair, Esteemed Delegates,

The European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) comprises 18,000 oncology professionals from 150 countries. As doctors who treat cancer patients according to the ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines, we know the negative effects that lack of access to cancer medicines can have on patient outcomes.

Recent ESMO studies show that two main barriers in access to cancer medicines are shortages of inexpensive essential cancer medicines, and high out-of-pocket costs of innovative expensive cancer medicines.

Therefore, ESMO welcomes the WHO Global Reporting System which will monitor the supply of essential cancer medicines. About 20 inexpensive cancer medicines and generics on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines are used in the treatment of 80% of cancers. These medicines are so critical to cancer care, that ESMO, together with The Economist Intelligence Unit, issued 6 policy recommendations on how to manage and prevent their shortage in Europe. One recommendation is to establish strategic plans that detail necessary actions to perform in the event of a shortage. We request that the WHO consider including the ESMO recommendations in its technical report on access to cancer medicines.

We agree with the WHO that investments in access to cancer medicines should be made where they offer the greatest value for money. Therefore, to assist health authorities in prioritizing the reimbursement of new and more expensive cancer medicines, ESMO has developed the ESMO Magnitude of Clinical Benefit Scale, a tool that grades cancer medicines according to their potential to improve patient outcomes.

In summary, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and Universal Health Coverage we must all work together to assure timely access to safe, quality cancer medicines that are available to health professionals, affordable for patients, economically feasible for health systems, and provide sufficient incentive for companies to produce them.

Thank you.