



ESMO Statement

74th World Health Assembly, 24 May – 1 June 2021

Agenda item 13.2: Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

Agenda item 13.3: Expanding access to effective treatments for cancer and rare and orphan diseases, including medicines, vaccines, medical devices, diagnostics, assistive products, cell- and gene-based therapies and other health technologies; and improving the transparency of markets for medicines, vaccines, and other health products

Honourable Chair, Esteemed Delegates,

The European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) is a global network of more than 25,000 cancer professionals from over 160 countries.

ESMO supports the 2018 UN Political Declaration on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) which include cancer, and the extension of the Global Coordination Mechanism, led by Member States and supported by the WHO, to coordinate with all stakeholders the implementation of the WHO Global NCD Action Plan and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to NCDs by 2030.

We commend countries' efforts to uphold health as a human right. However, as cancer doctors, we are concerned that despite the adoption of the 2017 World Health Assembly Cancer Resolution, in the 2020 WHO Report on Cancer it states that only 12 countries are on target to achieve SDG 3.4 to reduce premature deaths from cancer by one-third by 2030.

We call on governments to accelerate efforts by increasing cancer prevention initiatives, harnessing innovative health technologies, managing cancer medicines shortages, and expanding access to effective cancer treatments including those for rare cancers. We urge countries to ensure universal access to a core set of essential, affordable and effective cancer and palliative care services. As 24% of all new cancer cases are rare, ESMO would be pleased to collaborate with WHO and its Member States and share its over 10 years of experience leading Rare Cancers Europe and more recently of Rare Cancers Asia.

Thank you.