



ESMO Statement During the 2021 United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

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.

We welcome the High-level Segment and the monitoring of progress towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. During this decade of action and delivery we commend the United Nations and its agencies, especially the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency on Research for Cancer for keeping Noncommunicable Diseases, which include cancer, high on global public health and political agendas.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that to achieve sustainable development countries must uphold health as a basic human right and deliver on their commitments to provide universal health coverage that is affordable and leaves no one behind.

We are concerned about reports from the United Nations and WHO that many Member States are not on track to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, despite their adoption of numerous Resolutions and Political Declarations providing actionable blueprints on what can and needs to be done.

As cancer doctors, we work hard every day to save lives and support Sustainable Development target 3.4 to reduce premature deaths from Noncommunicable Diseases by one third by 2030. The 2020 WHO Report on Cancer stated that only 12 countries are on track to achieve this goal for cancer by 2030. To support governments to reduce premature cancer deaths, we would like to raise awareness of several of our many resources available on www.esmo.org:

- Over 80 evidence-based Clinical Practice Guidelines that set the standard of cancer care
- A COVID-19 and Cancer Portal that includes recommendations for cancer treatment during the pandemic, patient and palliative care guides, and a call to action to prioritise COVID-19 vaccination for cancer patients
- Recommendations on preventing and managing shortages of inexpensive essential cancer medicines used in the treatment of many cancers
- The ESMO-Magnitude of Clinical Benefit Scale for the prioritisation of expensive innovative cancer medicines to frame appropriate use of limited public and personal resources

We commend countries presenting their Voluntary National Reviews and achievements and request they present their plan to address cancer within Sustainable Development Goals 3.4 and 3.8 (Universal Health Coverage) by 2030.

We urge all governments to prioritise high-impact investments in cancer prevention and control by accelerating implementation of the 2017 Cancer Resolution (WHA70.12) and fully integrating comprehensive essential cancer services into universal health coverage benefit packages. The investment case reported in the 2020 WHO Report on Cancer stated that US\$ 1 invested in cancer care yields “a full social return based on both direct productivity and societal gains of US\$ 9.50”.



We request stronger implementation of cancer prevention measures recommended by the International Agency for Research on Cancer because 30-50% of cancer deaths are preventable.

We also encourage efforts to promote health literacy and empower individuals to make informed health decisions. COVID-19 has shown that we can and must work together as an international community to solve the greatest health challenges of our time and to build back better to secure the future we want.

Thank you.