



COVID-19 response

Agenda item 17.1

Documents A74/9, A74/15 and A74/INF./2

UICC and WCRF International, supported by NCDA, welcome the opportunity to contribute to this discussion given the catastrophic impact of COVID-19 on people living with NCDs. We strongly urge Member States to take up proposals made by the IPPR and a pandemic treaty, recognising its potential to protect future populations. In the ongoing COVID-19 response and future pandemic planning, we ask Member States to:

- Prioritise continuation of essential services for cancer and other NCDs including screening, diagnosis, access to treatment and palliative care. Screening services have seen some of the most severe disruptions, delaying accurate diagnosis and reducing opportunities for successful treatment or management, thus increasing the potential down-stream health impacts of the pandemic on populations.
- Invest in comprehensive mental health services, provide support for the health workforce who have been pushed to their limits in the pandemic, and ensure mental health services are prioritised in pandemic preparedness strategies.
- Increase monitoring and data collection on NCD prevalence, comorbidity and risk factors and integrate these into readiness, resilience and response measures, and health security indicators to identify high-risk groups such as older adults those with comorbidities, and people living with obesity.
- Include civil society and communities, including people living with NCDs, in planning for the COVID-19 response, recovery and future preparedness.
- Increase investments in health promotion and disease prevention, including promotion of healthy diets and physical activity, together with strong primary health care to improve the populations health and resilience.
- Request and resource WHO to develop practice tools, guidance and targets which include actions to prevent leading risk factors and maintain essential services for NCDs in pandemic planning, in order to ensure that Member States are well equipped to prevent and respond to future outbreaks.