

Towards the 73rd WHA Resolution

‘Global Action on Epilepsy and Its Synergies with Other Neurological Disorders’

Important Elements of the Concept

- Epilepsy is estimated to affect over 50 million people worldwide. The risk of premature death in people with epilepsy is three times higher than in the general population.
- Epilepsy and other neurological disorders are the leading cause of disability and the second leading cause of death worldwide and over the past 30 years the absolute number of deaths due to neurological disorders has increased by 39%¹
- Approximately 25% of epilepsy cases and a significant proportion of other neurological disorders could be prevented with broader public health actions
- Epilepsy is a highly treatable condition. Over 70% of people with epilepsy could live seizure free if they had access to appropriate anti-seizure treatment
- Despite the low cost of effective treatment for epilepsy (estimated at less than USD5/per person/year), the current treatment gap is over 75% in most low income countries and 50% in the majority of middle income countries².
- The lack of access to medicines, coupled with almost universal discrimination and stigma associated with epilepsy, is resulting in high levels of otherwise avoidable disability, mortality, social exclusion, economic disadvantage and negative mental health outcomes in people living with epilepsy.
- Addressing epilepsy is widely considered to be a **public health imperative**. Given the high global disability and mortality burden associated with epilepsy and other neurological disorders, achieving Universal Health Coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals will not be possible without concerted intersectoral efforts to address the needs of people at risk of or living with epilepsy or other neurological disorders.

Our REQUEST to the Director-General:

To develop, in consultation with Member States and in full collaboration with UN organizations and relevant non-state actors, a **15-year Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and its Synergies with Other Neurological Disorders** to address the current significant gaps in physical and mental health care and treatment, as well as social, economic, educational and inclusion needs of persons and families living with epilepsy and other neurological disorders, and the ongoing need for research to improve prevention, detection, treatment, care and rehabilitation.

To include ambitious but achievable global targets on reducing preventable cases of epilepsy and avoidable deaths, strengthening service coverage and access to essential medicines, improving surveillance and critical research and addressing discrimination and stigma.

¹ Epilepsy: A public health imperative. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019

² Epilepsy: A public health imperative. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019