Social determinants of health

Documents #EB148/24 and EB148/Conf./2

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this statement on behalf of UICC, representing 1191 members across 172 countries and territories.

We warmly welcome the report and resolution on the social determinants of health. As noted in a 2019 IARC report on social inequalities and cancer, social determinants impact all stages of the cancer control continuum. Inequities in access to cancer care and in exposure to risk factors between and within countries are closely associated with a person's risk of developing cancer and having poorer outcomes. We strongly support a stronger focus on social determinants of health across WHO as it supports a comprehensive approach to cancer control.

We urge Member States and WHO to:

- Develop appropriate indicators to measure the impact of social inequalities on non-communicable diseases including cancer. Work is taking place across the cancer and NCD community to monitor the coverage, availability, and quality of policies and interventions, including the NCD Best Buys, and we encourage Member States to work with WHO and civil society to leverage their support.
- Collect and disaggregate data to help identify key social determinants of health. We urge Member States to address the health of vulnerable groups, and in particular older adults whose health is shaped by multiple and interacting factors including the social determinants over the course of their life, and to promote the health and wellbeing of older persons in line with the UN decade of Healthy Ageing.
- Specifically consider the impact of unhealthy environments on populations in policy responses, including access to healthy, affordable, and nutritious food, protection from health harming products like tobacco and alcohol, and air pollution, and actions by unhealthy commodities that undermine health.
- Consistently promote equitable access to high quality and affordable vaccinations, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and palliative care as part of COVID-19 responses to build back better health systems to achieve universal health care.
- Ensure actions and policies are not confined to the health sector but adopt a whole of government approach to ensure consistency and coherence to tackling the social determinants of health.
- Share lessons learned and best practices to inform and support accelerated action on addressing the social determinants of health across all Member States.

UICC and its member organisations stand ready to support you in this important work.