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A HISTORIC MILESTONE IN THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT TO ELIMINATE CERVICAL CANCER

WHO's Global Strategy marks an unprecedented move to harness political will and ensure that future generations of women do not die from a preventable cancer

Tuesday 11 August, Geneva, Switzerland – The Union for International Cancer Control eagerly applauds the adoption of the World Health Organization's Global Strategy towards eliminating cervical cancer as a public health problem. **This is an unprecedented milestone** for public health and UICC will work tirelessly with its members and partners to support its optimal implementation.

Every two minutes a woman's life is lost to cervical cancer. It is the leading cause of cancer deaths in women in 42 countries and remains the fourth most common cause of cancer among women globally.

However, as most cases of cervical cancer are caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), it **can be successfully prevented through HPV vaccination** of girls and as well as boys (aged generally 11-12 years). **Cervical screening** further allows for the early diagnosis and treatment of pre-cancerous lesions. These measures form the foundation of the Global Strategy's approach to elimination, along with the prompt referral for treatment and palliative care in cases of invasive cervical cancer.

HRH Princess Dina Mired of Jordan, President of UICC, says: "So many women should not be dying from this disease. We have the tools to eliminate cervical cancer within a few generations! Thankfully, WHO's Global Strategy should help harness the high degree of political and social commitment necessary to ensure effective access to vaccines and screenings for all women, and to overcome the gender discrimination and stigma that are strong barriers to implementation."

The Global Strategy aims for all Member States to lower the annual incidence of cervical cancer to 4 cases per 100,000. The strategy also sets aspirational goals as well as short-term "90:70:90" targets for 2030: 90% coverage of HPV vaccination of girls (by 15 years of age), 70% coverage of screening with a high-performance HPV test (between the ages of 35 and 45 years) and 90% treatment of precancerous lesions and management of 90% of invasive cancer cases.

Achieving these objectives will require, in particular, bridging the inequity gap between high and lower-income countries, who bear the brunt of the burden of this disease. Low- and middle-income countries account for some 90% of cervical cancer deaths, and the global strategy underscores an international commitment to ensure that vaccination, screening and treatment services are widely established and scaled up.

"It is almost impossible to overstate the importance of this global strategy," says Dr Cary Adams, CEO of UICC. "This is not merely aspirational but a truly realistic goal. For the first time in history, the world could see the elimination not only of a cancer but of a non-communicable disease. UICC has worked for more than two years to support WHO's efforts to conceive, draft and present the strategy, and is now eager to continue working with its members on its implementation in their countries."

WHO Member States adopted the strategy alongside other health resolutions as part of the silence procedure launched after the most recent World Health Assembly held virtually in

May. The adoption sends a strong signal of worldwide interest in progressing on an essential public health issue even amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

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About the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

The Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) is the largest and oldest international cancer-fighting organisation. Founded in Geneva in 1933, UICC has over 1,180 member organisations in 172 countries. It enjoys consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and has official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UICC has over 50 partners, including associations, companies and foundations committed to the fight against cancer. UICC is a founding member of the NCD Alliance, the McCabe Centre for Law & Cancer, the International Cancer Control Partnership (ICCP) and established the City Cancer Challenge Foundation in January 2019.

UICC's mission is to both unite and support the cancer community in its efforts to reduce the global cancer burden, promote greater equity and ensure that cancer control remains a priority on the global health and development agenda. It pursues these goals by bringing together global leaders through innovative and far-reaching cancer-control events and initiatives, building capacities to meet regional needs and developing awareness campaigns.

More information is available at www.uicc.org.

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