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# STATEMENT ON STRENGTHENING PEOPLE-CENTRED HEALTH SYSTEMS

*Primary health care* builds upon interprofessional collaboration to deliver a wide range of essential health care services, which are the key to attaining *health for all* people through the provision of equitable, affordable and high-quality services. The primary health care team provides services to people and societies unconditionally from pre-natal to palliative and end of life care. However, primary health care workers are experiencing increasing pressure from new health care structures, rising patient demand, and scarcer resources. Inequitable resource distribution contrasts sharply with the general acceptance that primary care is the optimum way to deliver efficient and effective health care. Administrators, politicians and other stakeholders seem to lack understanding about the nature and core services provided by primary care professionals.

The organisations supporting this statement wish to support the WHO European Region in urging its Member States, and call for joint action to achieve:

- a) universal health coverage and high quality family medicine to be implemented and further developed in all European countries. This implies allocating resources in accordance with the principles stated in WHO policies;
- b) integration of health care services and promotion of interprofessional teams receiving a strong primary care education;
- c) stronger links between public health strategies and person-oriented medicine in clinical practice;
- d) a rational distribution of resources driven by the needs of the community.

Acknowledging the need to adopt a person-centred approach in the delivery of health services, we wish to reiterate that:

- a) primary care must be adequately resourced to secure efficient use of health care at all levels;
- b) training of high quality health care professionals takes time;
- c) encourage the identification of a strategic plan with actions that will lead to the delivery of consolidated curricula for primary health care professionals, enabling a certain degree of contextualised learning in response to the local needs, and offering clear and concise ways for retraining of relocated health professionals;
- d) we wish to collaborate with educational institutions and providers to help shape their training curricula and their continuing professional development accordingly;
- e) we support the establishment of strong teams that include all primary health care professionals to meet the changes in needs and demands in the population.

Finally, we wish to affirm WHO European Region Member States that our organisations:

- a) support the *Health in All Policies* and *Whole-of-Government* approach as a way to improve the health through intersectoral collaboration, and therefore we are committed to support and advise decision makers across sectors and policy areas as needed;
- b) encourage the establishment of a close collaboration among our members and governments, policy-makers and non-governmental organisations, aiming at further developing and strengthening of the human and institutional resources for primary health care.

## NGOS SUPPORTING THIS STATEMENT

- **COTEC:** The European organization for all Occupational Therapists through their National Associations, with the purpose of ensuring an adequate number of high quality occupational therapy practitioners and services in Europe. COTEC is a regional group of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), representing more than 130.000 Occupational therapists.
- **EFMA:** The European Forum of Medical Associations is a forum of national associations of physicians across the WHO European Region.
- **EFPC:** European Forum for Primary Care represents around 100 institutional members in the WHO European region active at policy making, academic and practice level in the Primary Care domain.
- **EPHA:** The European Public Health Alliance is a Europe-wide alliance of 90 civil society organisations advocating for policies to protect and improve public health.
- **IAHPC:** The International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care is an international membership organisation dedicated to the promotion and development of palliative care throughout the world.
- **MMI:** Medicus Mundi International – Network Health for All is a network of organizations working in the field of international health cooperation and global health.
- **WFOT:** The World Federation of Occupational Therapists is the official representative of occupational therapy internationally, representing 480,000 occupational therapists worldwide. WFOT through its member associations and regional groups promotes and establishes high quality occupational therapy services and education programmes.
- **WHPCA:** The Worldwide Hospice Palliative Care Alliance is an international non-governmental organisation focusing exclusively on hospice and palliative care development worldwide. We are a network of national and regional hospice and palliative care organisations and affiliate organisations.
- **WONCA Europe:** The European regional network of the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) represents more than 80,000 family doctors through their Member Organisations across Europe.