Dr Tedros Adhanom
World Health Organization
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Dear Dr Tedros

As representatives of organisations working on the advancement of palliative care worldwide, some of which are in official relations with WHO, we congratulate you on your election as Director General of the World Health Organization.

We welcome your long-standing experience, deep knowledge and understanding of the African and global health context, and in particular your commitment to the achievement of Universal Health Coverage.

As you may be aware, palliative care is one of the most inequitable areas of health care. It is estimated that 18 million people die with treatable pain and preventable suffering each year: 42% of WHO Member States have no hospice and palliative care services[1] and 5.5 billion people live in countries with little or no access to essential medicines for the treatment of moderate to severe pain, terminal breathlessness, and mental health disorders.[2]

Our organisations enjoy good working collaboration with WHO departments and staff assigned to implementing the recommendations of Resolution WHA 67/19 *Strengthening of palliative care as a component of comprehensive care throughout the life course*, which was unanimously adopted in 2014. Nevertheless, much remains to be done to make its recommendations a reality for the millions of adults and children with palliative care needs and their families. Without implementation, this suffering will continue.

As global and regional civil society leaders in the development of hospice and palliative care, we are committed to support WHO in advancing global health. We request your support in four key areas:

[1] WHO/WHPCA (2014) Atlas of Palliative Care at the End of Life
[2] INCB Annual Report 2014

1. **Promote the adequate funding, implementation and monitoring of World Health Assembly Resolution 67/19 on palliative care.** Implementation of this resolution by Member States and the WHO Secretariat must be adequately funded by the relevant bodies.

2. **Advocate for urgent attention to palliative care as an essential health service within Universal Health Coverage.** WHO recognises palliative care as an essential component of Universal Health Coverage. UHC will not be achieved without palliative care and yet, rehabilitation and palliative care are often neglected as part of the UHC response. There is currently no recommended indicator for monitoring palliative care progress as part of UHC. We request WHO to prepare guidance supporting the inclusion of palliative care within UHC packages, including monitoring systems to measure and evaluate access to palliative care and pain treatment, particularly in low and middle income countries.

3. **In line with WHA 67/19, ensure that WHO includes palliative care in all relevant global health plans and their implementation.** In particular, we request recognition and action on palliative care for adults and children for all relevant NCDs, including cancer and dementia, as well as HIV, drug resistant tuberculosis and access to palliative care for marginalised populations, including refugees and migrants. We look forward to working with the Secretariat on the implementation of the palliative care components of the recently adopted cancer resolution and Global Action Plan on Dementia.

4. **Ensure WHO's continued and increased focus and funded commitment on access to essential medicines, including to essential palliative care medications** and paediatric formulations, necessary for the treatment of severe pain and terminal breathlessness.[3]

We reiterate our congratulations on your election and look forward to continue collaborating with WHO in the coming years to improve access to palliative care for all those who need it.

Yours sincerely

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[3] IAHPC Essential Medicines in Palliative Care List

Co-signatories

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