

4 February 2019 – On World Cancer Day, 4 February, the World Health Organization is calling on communities and individuals alike to show support, raise their collective voices, take personal action and press their governments to do more. Cancer is one of the world's biggest killers. This theme this year is "I am and I will", which is all about your story and your commitment to affect and reduce the global cancer burden. So, power up because this day marks the beginning of a three-year campaign that encourages and educates people about the power they have to reduce the impact of cancer for themselves, for the people they love, and for the world.

The cancer burden

Globally, 9.6 million people die each year from cancer. In the Eastern Mediterranean Region, cancer is among the top three leading causes of death. Also, the Region has the highest projected increase in cancer rates compared to other WHO Regions. Estimates suggest that cancer rates and deaths will almost double by 2030, with 555 000 new cancer cases in 2012 compared to a projection of 961 000 new annual cancer cases by 2030.

The good news

More than one third of cancer cases can be prevented and, another third can be cured if detected early and treated properly. By implementing resource-appropriate strategies on prevention, early detection and treatment, we can save many lives. Thus, we need to act now. World Cancer Day is our opportunity to effect change, increase understanding, dispel misconceptions, and change behaviours.

WHO is taking action

At global and regional levels, WHO is taking action on cancer prevention and control. Support is being provided to countries, in the form of technical assistance, and evidence-based tools and guidance to #beatcancer. A regional framework for action on cancer prevention and control was endorsed by the 64th session of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, and is being used to take this agenda forward. This framework is a road map for countries of the Region to implement the United Nations Political Declaration on Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, and is central to accelerating action on cancer prevention and control. It sets out some of the strategic milestones that countries need to reach if they are to achieve the nine voluntary targets to reduce the number of premature deaths from noncommunicable diseases by 25% by 2025. The targets address risk behaviours, such as tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity.

Moreover, work on the elimination of cervical cancer has begun following the call-to-action by the WHO Director-General Dr Tudors in this regard. Moreover, the WHO Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer, which aims at reaching at least 60% survival for children with cancer by 2030, was launched in September 2018 and work on this initiative is planned to commence in the Region this year.

You should take action too

Make use of all World Cancer Day 2019 materials developed by the Union for International Cancer Control and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, at every opportunity, and disseminate its messages together with our commitments and initiatives. Our goal is to build a better, healthier future for people in the Region. Join us to do just that.

Related links

[World Cancer Day](#)

4 February 2019

[Noncommunicable diseases: Cancer](#)

[Regional framework for action on cancer prevention and control](#)

[WHO Director-General calls for all countries to take action to help end the suffering caused by cervical cancer](#)

[Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer](#)

[International Childhood Cancer Day](#)

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