

70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean,

Cairo, Egypt 9–12 October 2023

Statement by: Gulf Federation for Cancer Control (GFFCC)

Title: Advancing Cancer Research for Improved Early detection and Prevention

We humbly write this statement in preparation for the 70th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, Cairo, Egypt 9– 12 October 2023, emphasizing the pressing need to further cancer research efforts in our region.

As we know Cancer is a complex and multifaceted group of diseases, continues to pose significant challenges to healthcare sectors.

Cancer, a form of non-communicable disease (NCD), has emerged as a major public health concern in recent decades. While progress has been made in diagnosing and treating cancer, the root causes of many cancer types remain elusive. Therefore, we assert that cancer research must remain a paramount focus of global health.

In this regard, we call upon the international community to recognize the critical importance of fostering cancer research in areas, regions, or states that lack independent cancer research infrastructure.

One of our central goals is to encourage the establishment of regional cancer research initiatives, particularly in regions where shared risk factors, such as environmental influences, dietary habits, and genetic predispositions, all are play a significant role in the prevalence and early detection.

Cancer research not only contributes to the development of innovative therapies but also facilitates early detection, risk assessment, and prevention strategies. This, in turn, leads to improved outcomes for cancer patients and contributes to the overall well-being of communities.

To realize these goals, we propose the following actions:

- **Support for Emerging Research Centers:** We urge Member States and the international community to allocate resources to establish and sustain cancer research centers in regions lacking the necessary infrastructure.
- **Collaborative Research Networks:** Facilitate the creation of collaborative research networks that bring together experts and resources from different countries to study region-specific cancer challenges comprehensively.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Promote the exchange of research findings, best practices, and data among countries facing similar cancer risk factors to accelerate progress in cancer prevention and treatment.
- **Capacity Building:** Training and education programs to empower local researchers and healthcare professionals in underrepresented regions, fostering the growth of indigenous expertise in cancer research.

In conclusion, by endorsing the establishment of regional cancer research centers, initiatives and supporting collaborative efforts, we can collectively strive to unlock the mysteries of cancer, reduce its prevalence, and improve the lives of individuals affected by this disease. Together, we can make meaningful strides toward a future where cancer is no longer an insurmountable threat to global health.