



International Atomic Energy Agency

IAEA Statement

75th World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization

Geneva, 22 – 28 May 2022

Agenda item 14.1 Follow-up to the political declaration of the third high level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

Chair,

The IAEA conducts several activities aimed at addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cancer and cardiovascular disease. Cancer control in low- and middle-income countries remains a strong focus of the IAEA's work including through joint activities with WHO and IARC such as imPACT Reviews to assess comprehensive cancer control programme needs, developing national cancer control plans, and mobilizing partnerships and resources. The IAEA collaborates closely with WHO on their global cancer initiatives in cervical, childhood and breast cancers – including diagnostic imaging, radiology and nuclear medicine, and radiotherapy.

This year on World Cancer day, the IAEA launched Rays of Hope, a global initiative which will complement the ongoing efforts of the IAEA to assist Member States to improve their cancer care capacities. Rays of Hope will contribute to reducing premature mortality from cancer. Emphasizing treatment will also change the narrative that cancer is only associated with death and suffering, and motivate patients to seek help early, further improving outcomes. We very much thank the support of the WHO, in particular its Director General, to this major initiative.

The IAEA also assists countries in setting up facilities for radiotherapy and medical imaging and to acquire equipment for diagnosing cardiovascular disease and treating cancer. The IAEA and the WHO

have recently published a framework for setting up cancer centers in addition to the roadmap for a national comprehensive cancer control plan document. Joint WHO/IAEA guidance is essential to support Member States in addressing non-communicable diseases. The IAEA also supports capacity building and fellowship training for physicians and other professionals and supports innovation through research.

Over the sixty years of its existence, the IAEA/WHO postal dose audit service has played an important role in improving the accuracy and consistency of dosimetry in radiation therapy worldwide. The IAEA/WHO dosimetry audit programme helps hospitals in the Member States, either directly or through national audit networks, to have confidence in the radiation doses they are delivering to their patients. The service has been used by over 2300 radiotherapy hospitals in 135 countries. The dosimetry audit services are considered as vital for the safety of patients worldwide.

The IAEA has a longstanding relationship with the WHO in terms of the coordination of the IAEA/WHO Secondary Standards Dosimetry Laboratories (SSDL) Network. The IAEA/WHO Network of SSDLs improves the accuracy of radiation dosimetry related to medical applications of radiation, other applications of ionizing radiation (for example, in industry and agriculture), and radiation protection. Through the Joint IAEA/WHO postal audits and IAEA/WHO SSDL network's calibration activities, we can ensure accurate dosimetry so cancer patients receive the right dose of radiation.

We look forward to continuing our strong collaboration with WHO.

Thank you Chair.