



**International Atomic Energy Agency
IAEA Statement**

**79th Session of the WHO Assembly
Geneva, 18 to 23 May 2026**

Agenda Item 12.1 - 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, through its flagship Rays of Hope initiative, is supporting countries to improve access to radiotherapy, access to diagnostic imaging and nuclear medicine services to be delivered in a safe and quality manner. With key partners such as the World Health Organization and the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the IAEA works to assess needs and capacities of Member States and integrate radiation medicine services into national and comprehensive cancer control plans. The IAEA also welcomes the growing support of partners to the Rays of Hope initiative. For example, in 2026, through cooperation with the Government of Japan and Fujifilm, 26 mammography units are being provided to African countries to help expand access to early breast cancer detection services across the continent. This important contribution will strengthen national screening capacities and further support efforts to improve timely diagnosis and treatment for women in low- and middle-income countries.

Last year, the IAEA, in cooperation with WHO and IARC carried out comprehensive cancer control assessments or imPACT reviews in eight countries across regions. Others also received support for development of their National Cancer Control Plans. These assessments and plans are used to inform

resource mobilization of large-scale cancer control projects through the development of bankable documents.

In 2025, nine more Anchor Centres were designated, bringing the total to 20 globally. The Rays of Hope Anchor Centre network delivered key technical, training and research activities across regions in Japan, Argentina and Vienna. In 2025, IAEA carried out anchor centre expert missions to three countries to conduct gap assessments and finalize workplans, with focus on research and innovation, training and education, and quality assurance.

The IAEA strengthens the diagnosis and treatment of NCDs by issuing evidence-based guidance documents; developing scientific and technical publications; providing specialized technical expertise; creating and implementing quality-management audit tools; facilitating the transfer of appropriate technologies; and supporting the professional development of medical practitioners worldwide, particularly in LMICs. Through these efforts, radiation medicine services – comprising nuclear medicine and radiology for diagnostic imaging and radiotherapy for cancer treatment – are better equipped to safely deliver high-quality diagnostic tests and evidence-based therapies. This strengthens the management of non-communicable diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular and neurodegenerative disorders, and supports the accurate diagnosis of communicable and infectious diseases.

Chair, the IAEA organized the fourth International Conference on Advances in Radiation Oncology (ICARO-4) in Vienna, Austria, from 2 to 5 June 2025. Through sessions covering current status and advanced technologies of radiotherapy, the Agency examined the critical role of radiotherapy techniques in cancer management – expanding more than 600 participants' insights into emerging technologies and their impact in clinical applications.

The International Symposium on Standards, Applications and Quality Assurance in Medical Radiation Dosimetry (IDOS 2026) to be held this year will provide an international forum to discuss and disseminate the latest advances in radiation dosimetry for medical application of ionizing radiation, radiation protection and associated standards, thereby contributing to global dosimetry standardization.

In 2025, the joint IAEA/WHO postal dosimetry audit programme audited 935 radiotherapy and calibration beams in 90 Member States worldwide. The IAEA/WHO Network of Secondary Standards Dosimetry Laboratories was supported, including through 228 calibrations of instruments performed

by the IAEA Dosimetry Laboratory. These joint activities, both ongoing for more than 50 years, contribute to the safe and effective implementation of radiation imaging and treatment modalities at a global level.

Malnutrition is a major yet often overlooked determinant of survival in childhood cancer, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where up to 80% of affected children are malnourished. To address this gap, the IAEA has shown strong global leadership through a coordinated research project across nine countries, conducting the first large-scale, longitudinal study using nuclear techniques to assess body composition and energy requirements in more than 450 children over two years of treatment. This evidence will strengthen paediatric oncology nutrition practices in LMICs and support implementation under the IAEA's Rays of Hope initiative. Improving nutrition assessment and care is a low-cost, high-impact strategy that can substantially improve treatment tolerance, survival, and quality of life, highlighting the critical contribution of IAEA-supported nuclear science to reducing global childhood cancer inequities.

The IAEA is working closely with partners such as WHO to strengthen countries' capacities to assess and use nuclear technologies to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer. The IAEA and WHO are also supporting the Global Breast Cancer Initiative by creating a common implementation framework with resource-appropriate strategies for countries to improve both prompt diagnosis and timely treatment.

Finally Chair, we are pleased to inform that on 15 and 16 September, the IAEA will convene its Scientific Forum in Vienna. This year's theme will focus on cancer and the Rays of Hope initiative. We welcome the participation of all Member States and partners to the Scientific Forum.

We look forward to our ongoing collaboration with WHO and other partners. I thank you Chair.