

**Statement of the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM)
to the Agenda item 5b of
the 68th Session Regional Committee Meeting WHO Europe 2018**

The International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM) strongly supports the alignment of the goals of the Health 2020 program to the sustainable development goals (SDG) of the United Nations (UN). ISPRM welcomes the new Global Programme of Work and the accent on Universal Health Coverage (UHC). ISPRM welcomes the emphasis on rehabilitation and assistive technology as part of UHC.

Rehabilitation is a health strategy to enhance recovery, optimize functioning, and reduce disability in individuals with health conditions in interaction with their environment. It supports independent living and active participation in society and has shown to be cost-effective. Therefore, **access to high quality rehabilitation services is crucial to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.**

In line with the WHO Initiative “Rehabilitation 2030 – a call for action” (2017) we urge WHO Europe to explicitly state rehabilitation as a key health strategy, and an important factor for economic development and societal justice.

Due to the ageing population, increasing chronic health conditions and environmental factors, even European countries with well-developed health systems need to strengthen their rehabilitation services. Therefore, **we recommend putting the following actions** in the Agenda of WHO Europe:

- To map existing rehabilitation services (including access and quality of outcomes)
- To develop National Plans to improve rehabilitation service delivery and effectiveness
- To build capacity of a qualified rehabilitation workforce, including specialist physicians and other professionals
- To ensure access to quality and affordable assistive technology, delivered by competent professionals

ISPRM together with other rehabilitation organizations will support WHO in whatever needed to move the agenda forward for implementing rehabilitation as part of UHC.

Rome, Italy, 17-20 September 2018

On behalf of ISPRM,
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