

73rd Session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific Draft Statement in relation to agenda item 16.4 Items recommended by the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board

Handicap International Federation, World Confederation for Physical Therapy, World Federation of Occupational Therapists and World Federation of Chiropractic welcome that “strengthening rehabilitation in health systems” is one of the points in the provisional agenda of the next WHO Executive Board Meeting.

Over 2.4 billion people globally have conditions that would benefit from rehabilitation. The Western Pacific has the highest need of rehabilitation services. The global need for rehabilitation is rapidly growing, due to an ageing population and the increasing prevalence of chronic, non-communicable diseases, injuries and traumas. In addition, rehabilitation has demonstrated its relevance in health emergencies, including those associated with infectious disease outbreaks, like COVID-19.

Yet, rehabilitation services are often under-developed and under-resourced. As a result, 50% of people do not access the rehabilitation services they need, particularly in low and middle-income countries.

We invite the Member States of the Western Pacific Region to support and contribute to the process towards a World Health Assembly Resolution on Rehabilitation, in particular ensuring that commitments therein include:

1. Advancing integration of rehabilitation in health systems, at all levels of care and including emergency preparedness and response.
2. Strengthening the rehabilitation workforce, with a person-centred and a multidisciplinary approach.
3. Defining a set of feasible targets for monitoring and accountability purposes.

We encourage broad consensus and engagement to frame this political commitment and translate it into action. Civil society organisations remain committed to accompany these efforts.

