

# STOP CANCER NOW!

On this World Cancer Day 2013, participants of the World Oncology Forum raise the alarm about the increasing devastation caused by cancer across the world

Cancer is not only one of the biggest global killers but also one of the fastest growing causes of death. The annual number of new cases is expected to double over 25 years, to reach 22 million by 2030. The greatest burden will be felt in emerging countries. Acting now will save untold human suffering.

Every year cancer drains around \$900 billion from the world economy through lost output and the cost of care – 1.5% of global GDP.

At the 2012 World Health Assembly governments unanimously agreed to reduce preventable deaths from non-communicable diseases by 25% by 2025. For cancer, this would mean saving at least 1.5 million lives every year. Current strategies cannot come close to achieving this goal. A new and determined set of actions to foster research, modify lifestyles and environments, redesign health systems and reform health policy is urgently required.

**Governments, policy makers and everyone who can help stop unnecessary deaths from cancer must take action to:**

**Prevent preventable cancers:**

1. Wage war on tobacco, by far the biggest cause of cancer death across the globe. Extend to all countries the anti-tobacco measures already found to be effective and tax the profits made from tobacco.
2. Give people the knowledge they need to understand which cancers threaten them most, and how to reduce their risk; develop and implement scientifically sound strategies, including vaccines, to protect against cancers caused by infections.

**Treat treatable cancers:**

3. Develop early detection programmes tailored to local needs and resources, which target cancers that are the most detectable and treatable and have the greatest social impact.
4. Ensure that every cancer patient has access to a package of indispensable diagnostics and curative and palliative care that has been shown to get the best possible results within the local setting and is delivered by trained health professionals.

**Support all those who are living with cancer:**

5. Give all patients access to optimal pain control by changing attitudes and removing bureaucratic, legal and logistical barriers to the medical use of morphine.

6. Involve patients as partners in decisions about their own care and give them a voice in decision making about policies that affect them.

**Accelerate finding cures for cancers that are not yet curable:**

7. Replace the current broken business model for developing new therapies with more efficient forms of public-private collaboration, geared to accelerating delivery of affordable therapies that are of real benefit to patients across the world.

**To achieve all the above:**

8. Educate policy makers and the public to counter the entrenched fatalistic myths and misconceptions that undermine efforts to mobilise forces against cancer and deter people who suspect they may have cancer from seeking early medical advice.
9. Promote and strengthen sustainable and universally accessible health systems that are supported by innovative financing mechanisms, and are driven by evidence about cost-effective ways to deliver the best results and not by vested economic interests.
10. Ensure that all countries have a clear cancer control strategy that evolves in the light of needs and experience, and is built on creative ideas, backed by solid evidence, in order to turn back the tide on cancer.



The World Oncology Forum (WOF) was a gathering of leading cancer researchers, clinicians, policy makers, industry representatives, patient advocates and journalists. It was convened by the European School of Oncology on the occasion of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Lugano, Switzerland, on 26-27 October 2012, in partnership with *The Lancet*.

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