

**Statement of the I.R.Iran on
"Addressing diabetes as a public health challenge in the Eastern Mediterranean
Region"**

**Mr./Madam Chairperson,
Excellences, ladies and gentlemen**

First, I would like to thank for this progress report, prepared by WHO/EMRO.

WHO has rightly prioritized stopping the increase in the prevalence of diabetes and obesity since a decade ago, but achieving to this goal has not been possible due to various reasons. The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the biggest health challenges in the last three years, and it does not seem that its negative impacts can be easily managed. By implementing the regional diabetes framework, which is organized around 4 areas of governance, prevention of risk factors, management and monitoring, the goal of diabetes control will be achieved.

Two decades ago, the Islamic Republic of Iran started the program for the prevention and control of diabetes and blood pressure, then in 2016, the country integrated its program, which was based on the PEN protocol, in the package of the family physician program (IRAPEN). According to Iran's experience in implementing the HEARTS project, we offer five recommendations in the field of governance and management:

- 1) In the field of governance, we suggest WHO to develop a new module in the HEARTS-D package as a guide for the treatment of obesity as an independent disease.
- 2) Adopting the strategy of dividing responsibility for disease control between the patient and physician
- 3) Setting indicators in the regional strategy in order to strengthen access to diabetes testing and treatment to scale up political commitment among regional countries
- 4) Considering the importance of implementation of obesity prevention and control program by taking a life course approach, with an aim to increase patients' adherence, the drug treatment of obesity should be considered after lifestyle modification interventions or parallel to it. because lifestyle modification in adults is not easily possible
- 5) Sufficient evidences support the positive effect of new hypoglycemic drugs in controlling obesity. The new generation of GLP-1 agonists, which are also injected weekly, make weight loss possible. The price of these drugs is the biggest barrier against their universal access, and it seems that WHO interventions could help reduce the price of these drugs.

Madam/Mr. Chair

Thank you for your attention

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