



**Alzheimer's Disease  
International**

*The global voice on dementia*

**Thirteen Session of the Working Group on Ageing for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons**

*The following statement was submitted under the respective agenda item: Right to health and access to health services*

While dementia is not a part of normal aging, age is the greatest risk factor for developing the condition. As such Alzheimer's Disease International, the federation of Alzheimer's disease and dementia associations from around the world calls on Member States of the United Nations to improve the access of those living with dementia to health and health services.

In 2021, Alzheimer's Disease international (ADI) launched its World Alzheimer Report: The journey through the diagnosis of dementia which found that up to 75% of people living with dementia are undiagnosed at any one point in time. In the World Alzheimer Report 2022: Life after diagnosis: Navigating treatment, care and support, ADI found that up to 85% of those living with dementia are not receiving the post-diagnostic support that they need, if underdiagnosis rates are factored into this calculation. Collectively the findings of these reports exemplify the critical need for improvements to health services for older persons and particularly those living with dementia.

Exacerbating the aforementioned issues, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased waiting times and the reduction in the services provided for those living with dementia, meaning that many went without essential treatment and support services, with many more having missed out on a timely diagnosis.

Improving and addressing the access to healthcare systems globally is becoming increasingly important in the context of potential for new disease modifying treatments entering the market. The United States of America has recently approved its second treatment for Alzheimer's disease in over 20 years, and we eagerly await the decision of other healthcare markets across the globe. As for all approved treatments and for those in development, their approval further highlights the necessity to address health system readiness across the globe, so that those living with dementia have the right to access these treatments to potentially prolong health and wellbeing. Accordingly, their approval in high-income countries raises important questions relating to the availability of the treatment, access, eligibility and affordability for those living with dementia in markets where there are no imminent plans to file regulatory approval, or for countries where health systems are still being developed, especially those in low-and-middle income countries.

Accordingly, in 2017, all 194 WHO Member States, unanimously adopted the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Global Action Plan on the Public Health Response to Dementia with the

primary objective of the plan being the creation of national dementia plans and strategies. However, the WHO Global Status Report on the Public Health response to dementia, and ADI's own report 'From plan to impact V', tracking the progress of Member States towards achieving the outcomes of the plan, have demonstrated that most Member States are yet to uphold their 2017 commitment and thus its promise to provide adequate care and support to those living with dementia, carers and the public.

ADI strongly believes that dedicated, funded national dementia plans, created by expert, multidisciplinary teams, including those living with dementia and their carers, is the best and most robust way to manage the multifaceted challenges of dementia to healthcare systems, to governments, society and, of course, to those people directly impacted by the condition.

Well managed plans are also cost effective. The cost of dementia care (both informal and formal) is a considerable economic burden, with 50% of the costs relating to informal care, 36% to the social care sector and 14% to the medical sector, but there are ways to lessen the cost for countries - be they in higher income or lower income brackets- in the long run through joined-up, cohesive, and financed national dementia plans.

Accordingly, Alzheimer's Disease International urges all Member States of the WHO and governments across the world to implement National Dementia Plans and commit to improving the lives of those living with dementia and carers all across the world.