Seventy Third Session of the WHO Regional Committee Meeting for the Eastern Mediterranean

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Organization Name : *Global Self-Care Federation (GSCF)*

Agenda item : ***5(f) Implementing the regional strategy and action plan for tobacco control (****Document EM/RC/INF.DOC.6)*

English version:

The Global Self-Care Federation (GSCF) welcomes this progress report and commends WHO and Member States for their continued efforts to advance implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the MPOWER measures across the Eastern Mediterranean Region. We also welcome the renewed focus on protecting children and young people from tobacco and recreational nicotine product use and addressing the growing challenges posed by emerging recreational products.

GSCF notes the report's finding that, while tobacco use prevalence is declining, the Region remains off track to achieve the global target of a 30% reduction in tobacco use by 2030 and the absolute number of tobacco users is projected to continue increasing due to demographic growth. These findings reinforce the need to expand access to effective, evidence-based cessation support and prevention interventions.

From a self-care perspective, empowering individuals to quit tobacco use is critical to reduce the burden of noncommunicable diseases. We encourage Member States to expand access to evidence-based cessation support, including health information, behavioural support, and licensed nicotine replacement therapy. GSCF's EcoSoc 2.0 report highlights smoking cessation as an important form of preventive self-care with significant long-term health, social and economic benefits.

Health literacy and access to reliable health information are also essential to addressing misconceptions about tobacco and recreational nicotine products. Community-based health professionals, including pharmacists, can support quit attempts by providing trusted advice and directing individuals to appropriate cessation treatment and services.

Finally, strengthened surveillance of tobacco and recreational nicotine product use, including cessation and quit attempts, can help inform more effective, people-centred and evidence-based interventions.

GSCF remains committed to supporting WHO, Member States and partners in advancing a comprehensive approach to tobacco control that combines prevention, health promotion and access to cessation support, while recognizing the important role of self-care and individual empowerment in achieving a tobacco and nicotine-free future.

Thank you.