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

Cairo, Egypt
13 - 15 October 2026

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

Agenda item : *5(k) Regional strategy for fostering digital health in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (2023–2027) (Document EM/RC73/INF.DOC.11)*

English version:

The Global Self-Care Federation (GSCF) welcomes this progress report and commends the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office and Member States for the advances made in implementing the regional strategy for fostering digital health. We particularly welcome the report's emphasis on people-centred, accessible and affordable digital health services, as well as its focus on digital health literacy, telehealth and innovation as enablers of health system transformation.

GSCF recognizes digital health as an important catalyst for self-care. Digital tools can empower individuals to access trusted health information, support healthy behaviours, improve disease prevention and self-management, and facilitate timely engagement with health professionals. As countries continue to develop and implement national digital health strategies, we encourage greater recognition of digital self-care solutions as a means of advancing health literacy, patient empowerment and universal health coverage.

We welcome the report's identification of digital literacy as a key challenge for both the public and health workforce. To realize the full benefits of digital health, investments should not only focus on technology and infrastructure but also on building the skills, confidence and trust needed for individuals to effectively use digital health services and tools. Digital inclusion should remain a priority, particularly for underserved populations and those living in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

Finally, we encourage continued engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, including patient organizations, healthcare professionals, academia and the private sector, to support the development of trusted, evidence-based digital health ecosystems that enable individuals to take a more active role in managing their health and well-being.

GSCF remains committed to supporting WHO and Member States in leveraging digital health to strengthen self-care, improve health literacy and expand equitable access to quality health services across the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

Thank you.