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 : *6(a) Advancing health financing for stronger financial protection in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: pathways to equity and resilience*

English version:

The Global Self-Care Federation (GSCF) welcomes this technical paper and commends WHO and Member States for their efforts to strengthen health financing, improve financial protection and accelerate progress towards universal health coverage across the Eastern Mediterranean Region. We particularly welcome the emphasis on improving health system efficiency, strengthening primary health care and investing in cost-effective interventions.

GSCF encourages greater recognition of self-care as an important contributor to sustainable health systems and more efficient use of healthcare resources. Responsible, evidence-based self-care empowers individuals to prevent illness, manage common health conditions and make informed decisions about when to seek professional care, helping to reduce avoidable pressure on health systems.

GSCF's report on the Global Social and Economic Impact of Self-Care demonstrates the substantial economic and societal value of self-care, including freed up resources, reduced demand for physician consultations and productivity gains. Integrating self-care into national health strategies can therefore complement efforts to improve efficiency and enable scarce healthcare resources to be directed towards more complex health needs.

Importantly, self-care is also a key enabler of UHC, critical to prevention strategies and helping to create headroom for primary healthcare while empowering individuals to take an active role in maintaining their health and well-being. Integrating self-care into primary healthcare approaches can improve access to essential health interventions. This requires strengthening health literacy, ensuring access to safe, effective and quality-assured self-care products, including non-prescription medicines, and recognizing the important role of community-based health professionals, including pharmacists.

GSCF encourages WHO and Member States to recognize self-care within health financing and UHC strategies as an essential component of equitable, people-centred and sustainable health systems.

Thank you.