



FOREWORD

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Globally, cancer is one of the noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) that kills more than 36 million people each year. Cancer alone is responsible for 8.2 million deaths every year. More than 60% of new cases and 70% of cancer deaths are now occurring in Africa, Asia and Central and South America, where most of the countries have low or middle incomes. Regrettably, more than 9 million of all deaths attributed to NCDs occur before the age of 60; around 90% of these premature deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.

Countries of the world committed themselves to action on prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases at the 2011 United Nations Political Declaration and, subsequently, through the global NCD Action Plan endorsed by the World Health Assembly. These commitments have been translated into voluntary targets to be attained by 2025, including a 25% relative reduction in mortality from NCDs.

Cancers account for the second highest burden of noncommunicable disease globally. For low- and middle-

income countries this will require action on all fronts. Health systems need to address cancer management through strengthening health systems and moving towards universal health coverage. Also, with behavioural and dietary risk factors accounting for around one third of cancer deaths and viral infections for up to 20% of cancer deaths in low- and middle-income countries, there is much work to be done on prevention in terms of both public education and national policy action. In the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, where a quarter of a million people die from cancers each year, with serious gaps in access to treatment and quality cancer care, even in high-income countries, a regional framework for action agreed with the member states sets out some of the strategic milestones that countries need to reach if they are to achieve the 2025 targets.

It is a relief to many of us working in global health to see the momentum now gathering around the global movement against cancer and other noncommunicable diseases. This latest edition of *Cancer Control* reflects, and is an important part of, that movement. ●