

The Global Breast Cancer Initiative:

An informal dialogue on access to essential breast cancer medicines and technologies

18 September 2024, 15:00–17:30 (CEST)

Location: Geneva, Switzerland

Concept note and provisional agenda

Background

Breast cancer is the leading type of cancer in 157/179 countries with 70% of mortality occurring in low- and middle-income countries. It represents 25% of all cancers in women. Despite this alarming statistic, there has been limited progress in reducing the burden of disease with only an estimated 20 high-income countries being on track to achieve the goal of 2.5% mortality reduction per year by 2040. Health system barriers contribute to late-stage diagnosis and high mortality especially in resource constrained regions. Universal health coverage hinges on the right of everyone to access safe, quality-assured, effective and affordable health care services without financial hardship but challenges in accessing breast cancer health products and technologies have become one of the most pressing concerns. The World Health Organization's Global Breast Cancer Initiative (GBCI), established in 2021, highlights the need for early and timely diagnosis and treatment completion without abandonment to improve breast cancer survival.

In this regard, WHO intends to convene an informal dialogue to discuss priorities, policies and actions that can be taken to improve access to breast cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment at population level within countries. This convening will draw attention to persistent shortages hindering effective service delivery and impacting on patient outcomes, provide an avenue for advocacy, understanding and knowledge sharing and stimulate a discussion on how working collaboratively, inequities in access to diagnostics, medicines and technologies can be addressed to ensure early detection, prompt diagnosis and treatment completion in line with the right to health, health equity and achievement of universal health coverage. It will also seek to highlight, among others, the inclusion of therapeutic solutions in national essential medicines lists, market shaping and country dynamics including regulatory approvals, access to clinical trials, and sustainable capacity building for utilization of breast cancer technologies. The focus will be on existing challenges, showcasing examples of evidence-based solutions, and highlighting opportunities countries can leverage to inform best practice in improving access to care across the regions. The objectives of this meeting are:

1. To identify strategies for effective public- private collaboration in addressing barriers in access to breast cancer health products and technologies (HPTs).
2. To provide a knowledge sharing platform to inform the discourse, advocacy and enhance understanding for decision-making in ensuring access to breast cancer HPTs.

3. To share experiences, best practices and innovations for breast HPTs in improving uptake of breast cancer early and timely diagnosis including opportunities for integrated care delivery models at primary health care.
4. To highlight market shaping opportunities in achieving the GBCI agenda across the three KPIs and the required support for improving access to HPTs for breast cancer at country level.

Participants and platform

The World Cancer Congress is a biennial event convened by the UICC and presents an opportunity to network with various stakeholders in cancer control. WHO will on the sidelines of the World Cancer Congress convene the global breast cancer community in a 2.5-hour physical event that will provide the opportunity to discuss breast cancer partnerships and opportunities for collaboration in ensuring access to breast cancer care.

This session will be hosted in-person by WHO on 18 September 2024, from 15:00 to 17:30 (CEST) at WHO headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland. This is an invite only event. Audience members will be able to participate and can ask questions through the Q&A session.

Participants

- WHO headquarters, regional and country offices, UN agencies
- Various private sector players, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions and philanthropic organizations involved breast cancer and integrated women's health programmes
- Selected Member States and institutions
- Persons with lived experiences and civil society groups.

Provisional agenda

18 September 2024, 15:00-17:30 (CEST)
Geneva, Switzerland (in-person by invitation)

Time	Agenda item	Presenter/facilitator
15:00–15:10	Welcome and introduction Setting the stage: Introductions and meeting agenda	Rizu, Consultant, Global Breast Cancer Initiative
15:10–15:20	Opening remarks and briefing: WHO GBCI and what is required to advance the GBCI target	Dr Bente Mikkelsen, Director, Department of Noncommunicable Diseases, Rehabilitation and Disability (NCD), UCN, WHO/HQ
15:20–16:00	Panel discussion: Advancing GBCI access to medicines and technologies The role of private sector and NGOs, market dynamics/market shaping and implications for the public sector, health care providers, MS, patients and introduction to WHO catalogue	Co-moderated by Dr Mary Nyangasi, Technical Officer, Lead, Global Breast Cancer Initiative, WHO/HQ RO (TBC)
16:00–16:30	Breakaway sessions (15 mins) and summary presentations Pillar 1: Early detection Pillar 2: Timely diagnosis Pillar 3: Treatment completion without abandonment	
16:30–16:35	5-minute comfort break	
16:35–16:45	Overview: Preliminary asks for access to medicines and technologies to the private sector and NGOs	MS (TBC)
16:45–17:00	• Discussion on preliminary asks: NGOs, private sector perspective	(All participants)
	• Open discussion with guiding questions framed around thematic areas	Co-moderated by Dr André Ilbawi, Technical Lead, Cancer, WHO/HQ
17:00–17:30	Closing remarks: • Summary of discussions • Next steps and key takeaways for the dialogue and discussion paper • Closing remarks	TBC

Thematic areas: Regulatory frameworks, pricing policies, procurement models, taxation, access programmes, capacity building, research/clinical trials, AI and precision oncology, patient-centred innovations, breast care integration in PHC.