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74th Session of SEA WHO Regional Committee  
Joint Statement for International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE)  
and International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE)

Agenda Item 9.3: Delhi Declaration on improving access to essential medical products  
in the Region and beyond

The International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) promotes evidence-based care and treatment for people with epilepsy through a global network of 26,000 professional and scientific members in 168 countries and territories. The International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) improves the social condition and quality of life of people with epilepsy and those who care for them through a network of 140 chapters in over 100 countries. ILAE and IBE have worked closely with WHO for more than 25 years on a campaign to bring epilepsy out of the shadows to achieve a world where no person’s life is limited by epilepsy, producing the 2019 Global Report on Epilepsy which concluded that epilepsy should be considered a public health imperative, and most recently supported the draft Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and Other Neurological Disorders circulated by WHO at the end of June.

People with epilepsy have a rate of premature death three times higher than the general population, however only around 20% of people across the region have access to effective medication. The Delhi Declaration 2018 acknowledged access to effective, safe, quality and affordable medical products (medicines, diagnostics and medical devices) is vital to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

With more than 50 million people living with epilepsy worldwide of which 15 million are in South East Asia, it is vital that an outcome focused cascade target such as the 90-80-70 target proposed by ILAE and IBE is adopted in order to incentivise intersectoral action and strengthening across the health system but, once achieved, would bring real and measurable change to millions of lives:

• 90% of people with epilepsy are aware of their diagnosis as a treatable brain disorder - achievable through public and professional education and diagnostic capacity building

• 80% of people diagnosed with access to appropriate, affordable safe medications - achievable based on the low cost of medications (USDS5/per annum), and the huge success of demonstration projects as part of the WHO-ILAE-IBE Global Campaign Against Epilepsy

• 70% of those treated achieving adequate seizure control – for which multiple large cohort studies have provided a strong evidence base

Access to uninterrupted care including essential medical products is the greatest challenge in closing the treatment gap across South East Asia and beyond. ILAE and IBE applaud the Delhi Declaration for reaffirming commitments by Member States in Regional Committee and World Health Assembly resolutions to improve accessibility and affordability by action on strengthening national policies, regulation, rational use, supply chain management, capacity to leverage intellectual property and trade for public health and building on SEA/RC70(3) decision on access to medicines and WHA71(8) addressing the global shortage of, and access to, medicines. It is hoped that the implementation of the Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and Other Neurological Disorders will ensure that there is a structure in place for better epilepsy care and that everyone, no matter what their economic or geographical position, has access to affordable and effective treatment including essential medical products.