

75th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

EUR/RC75

NSA Written Statement on

Provisional Agenda item 8 “A healthy start for a healthy life: a strategy for child and adolescent health and well-being in the WHO European Region 2026–2030”

On behalf of the **World Rehabilitation Alliance (WRA)** and its **103 member organizations**, we welcome the **WHO European Strategy for Child and Adolescent Health and Well-being 2026–2030: A Healthy Start for a Healthy Life** and commend its clear, actionable framework.

Collectively, our organizations support countries in ensuring that all children and adolescents who experience limitations in functioning—whether temporary or long-term—have access to the rehabilitation services they need to move, communicate, learn, and participate fully in daily life. While rehabilitation comprises the set of interventions that strengthen health systems to optimize individual functioning, functioning itself is the measurable outcome enabling full participation, mental well-being, and engagement in society. Access to rehabilitation and related health services is essential to support optimal functioning throughout childhood and adolescence.

According to a 2023 UNICEF report, Europe and Central Asia is home to an estimated 10.8 million children experiencing functional limitations, most commonly related to mobility, learning, communication, and psychosocial development. Ensuring that these children can reach their full potential reflects the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, both of which affirm every child's right to health, inclusion, and participation.

We therefore urge WHO and Member States to ensure that rehabilitation is fully embedded within maternal, child, and adolescent health systems, consistent with the life-course vision of **Rehabilitation 2030: A Call for Action** and the 2023 World Health Assembly resolution on strengthening rehabilitation in health systems.

Specifically, we call on Member States to:

1. Invest in workforce education and early identification within maternal, child, and adolescent health services.
2. Integrate rehabilitation in primary care and across the continuum of care pathways from birth through adolescence, linking health, education, and social sectors.
3. Invest in innovation and promote evidence-based telehealth, assistive technologies, and AI-powered tools for early detection.
4. Invest in digital literacy for families, adolescents and professionals to bridge the digital divide and address digital poverty through subsidised access programs and ensure technologies are culturally adapted
5. Improve data collection and use to better understand unmet needs, track children's development and participation, and guide investment in rehabilitation services and equitable access.

By embedding rehabilitation within maternal and child health, the Region can ensure that every child not only survives, but develops, learns, and thrives to their full potential.

Thank you.

Copenhagen, 30 October 2025

Submitted by the International Association of Communication Sciences and Disorders (IALP)
on behalf of Members of the World Rehabilitation Alliance (WRA).