

WHO Members States must not miss opportunity to improve lives of over 460 million people with diabetes

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AMSTERDAM— A resolution on the prevention and control of diabetes tabled at the 74th World Health Assembly (WHA74) offers a unique opportunity to improve the affordability and availability of insulin. Health Action International (HAI), Santé Diabète and T1International are calling on World Health Organization (WHO) Member States to adopt the resolution to address this condition that affects the lives of the over 460 million people with diabetes around the world.

The resolution, proposed by the Russian Federation and co-sponsored by a number of countries, comes in the centenary year of the discovery of insulin, a breakthrough that turned type 1 diabetes from a death sentence to a manageable condition. Yet, despite insulin being the foundation of treatment for over 70 million people globally, only half of those in need of insulin have regular access. In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), people on low wages must work up to 14 days to afford 10ml (= one vial) of insulin. This struggle for accessing insulin impacts not only individuals and their families, but also national health systems and economies.

“In LMICs such as Mali, commitment to action on access to insulin could greatly impact people who need insulin, where currently a year of insulin supply absorbs more than 17% of a family’s income”, said Stéphane Besançon of NGO Santé Diabète.

Yaa Bimpeh Amoah, a T1International advocate in Ghana, added: “the passage of this resolution would be a monumental step by high-level actors to acknowledge the reality that one in two people in need of insulin cannot access or afford it. In Ghana, living with diabetes is a challenge and the high cost of insulin keeps many from optimal diabetes management. Diabetes needs to be a priority.”

The three organisations have urged Member States to adopt the proposed resolution and:

- Commit to concrete actions to improve availability and affordability of quality-assured insulin, delivery devices and blood glucose monitoring tools for all who need them.
- Develop and promote health policies and systems recognizing the differences between type 1 and type 2 diabetes and support person-centered approaches to care.
- Ensure transparency of markets for insulin and related commodities to empower purchasers.
- Collaborate with WHO to ensure the Global Diabetes Compact has tangible outcomes.

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