

Drog

Excellency,

I want to start by congratulating you on your good work as President of the 73rd General Assembly.

I had the pleasure of meeting your predecessor last year and among the issues we discussed was the importance of raising awareness of neurological disorders, including spinal cord injuries. Neurological disorders are among the non-communicable diseases covered in Agenda 2030 and SDG3.

According to information from the World Health Organization (WHO), neurological disorders affect up to a billion people worldwide and remain costly for societies, both rich and poor.

While a lot of work has been done on enhancing rehabilitation of patients with neurological disorders, there has been less progress on research aiming to cure patients, in particular those with spinal cord injuries. Therefore, from 2014, our focus has been on how we can provide better data to improve research – aiming to cure, rather than only making life bearable.

Recently, the Nordic countries have decided to put effort into combining research databases from all the five countries to provide researchers with better data. We are also looking into the possibility of using artificial intelligence for more effective analysis of the new database.

The Icelandic government has also appointed a Geneva-based Special Envoy on neurological disorders and spinal cord injuries, tasked with mapping the work current efforts and partnership opportunities.

Last month, I met with Mr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus to request the cooperation of WHO for improving the global research databases in this area. We do not want to duplicate efforts already under way but rather compliment the work that is already being done. We agreed to work towards enlarging the Nordic database through collaborative efforts and are currently elaborating the details.

I would like to request your support in bringing this matter forward among the general membership and to seek your guidance on how to better raise awareness about neurological disorders, in particular spinal cord injuries. We will continue to bring this issue forward in relevant General Assembly resolutions and hope to rely on your support.