

**World health Assembly 73
November 9 – 14 2020**

Item 11.6 Global actions on epilepsy and other neurological disorders

Thank you. I am speaking on item 11.6 on the agenda.

Iceland thanks the Russian Federation for the leadership on this important topic and is pleased to support the resolution as a co-sponsor.

We do so as we have, with many other partners over recent years, highlighted the heavy global burden of neurological conditions, being the second leading cause of death and a leading cause of disability in the world with estimated one in three people having a neurological disorder at some point in their lifetime.

The fact that neurological conditions are the second most common comorbidities in patients with COVID-19 illness and that underlying neurological conditions increase the risk of hospitalization and mortality, makes our work here even more urgent.

This is compounded by neurological research often being fragmented and using different concepts and approaches. Iceland has highlighted the use of artificial intelligence in research as it offers an opportunity to consolidate fragmented results and can identify new treatment options with potential to cure neurological disorders.

We truly believe that we should not only be focused on care and treatment of these conditions, but equally prevention and finding a cure. It is for this reason that Iceland has emphasized in particular the need to strengthen research of neurological disorders, strengthening of health information systems and sharing of data.

We have done exactly this within the Nordic Council of Ministers and have together with the Nordic countries set up a dedicated Nordic Spinal Cord Injury Register, NordicSCIR. We are also very supportive of WHO establishing a dedicated unit focused on brain health which aims to promote optimal brain development, cognitive health and wellbeing for all across the life-course. Iceland is pleased to provide financial support to this work and encourages others to do the same.

Iceland has placed particular emphasis on spinal cord injuries within neurological disorders. We are therefore pleased that the resolution recognizes the need to address spinal cord injuries and the broad nature of neurological disorders. In that spirit, we are looking forward to working with all stakeholders in the development of the 10-year Intersectoral Global Action Plan on this important topic that touches so many lives all around the world.

Thank you.

Check against delivery.