

Rehabilitation 2030: A Call for Action

Concept Note

BACKGROUND

There is a substantial and ever-increasing unmet need for rehabilitation worldwide, which is particularly profound in low- and middle-income countries.^{1,2,3} Improvements in medical treatment and healthcare systems have resulted in higher survival rates from disease and injury, with many people continuing to live with some form of residual impairment.⁴ This, in combination with rising prevalence of noncommunicable diseases and the ageing population, implies a growing demand for rehabilitation services.¹ In many parts of the world, however, the capacity to provide rehabilitation is limited or non-existent and fails to adequately address the needs of the population.^{1,2}

With its objective of optimizing functioning, rehabilitation supports those with health conditions to remain as independent as possible, to participate in education, to be economically productive, and fulfil meaningful life roles. As such, the availability of accessible and affordable rehabilitation plays a fundamental role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”.⁵

The barriers to scaling up rehabilitation indicate a need for greater awareness and advocacy, increased investment into rehabilitation workforce and infrastructure, and improved leadership and governance structures.^{1,2} The scarcity of evidence for rehabilitation, particularly from a system-level perspective, presents a challenge for the development of technical guidance and policy making. The magnitude and scope of unmet rehabilitation needs signals an urgent need for concerted and coordinated global action by all stakeholders. While the rehabilitation community is united behind a common vision to see rehabilitation available to all who need it, the actualization of this vision requires considerable investment, the availability of technical tools and support, and importantly, strong political will.

The *WHO global disability action plan 2014-2021*² lays out actions for WHO, Member States and partners towards the objective of strengthening and extending rehabilitation. The SDGs and their emphasis on equity and universal health coverage offer a window of opportunity to mobilize the rehabilitation and broader health community towards the achievement of this objective as an essential step towards ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being by 2030. Bringing together

¹ World Health Organization and The World Bank, *World report on disability*. 2011, Geneva, Switzerland: WHO Press.

² World Health Organization (2015). *WHO global disability action plan 2014-2015. Better health for all people with a disability*. WHO Press: Geneva, Switzerland.

³ Department for International Development, *Disability, poverty and development*. 2000: London, United Kingdom.

⁴ World Health Organization, *World Health Statistics 2016. Monitoring Health for the SDGs*. 2016, Geneva, Switzerland: WHO Press.

⁵ United Nations. *Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. Sustainable Development Goals*. 2015 [cited 2016 14 April]; Available from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

stakeholders in the Rehabilitation 2030: A Call for Action meeting will provide an invaluable opportunity for discussing the strategic direction for coordinated action and establishing joint commitments to raise the profile of rehabilitation as a health strategy relevant to the whole population, across the lifespan and across the continuum of care.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the Rehabilitation 2030: A Call for Action meeting will bring together government officials, WHO and other UN agencies, organizations representing rehabilitation service user groups and rehabilitation providers, funding bodies, major professional organizations, research institutions, and relevant international and nongovernmental organizations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

1. To draw attention to the increasing needs for rehabilitation.
2. To highlight the role of rehabilitation in achieving the SDGs.
3. To call for coordinated and concerted global action towards strengthening rehabilitation in health systems.

TIME AND VENUE

6 - 7 February 2017

Executive Board Room, WHO headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland.