

WHO Regional Committee for Europe: 66th session September 2016

**Statement in response to EUR/RC66/9:
Action plan for the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region
Provisional Agenda item 5(d)**

At this critical point in Europe with regards to increasing numbers of new HIV infections rates this Action Plan, which advocates an urgent and accelerated health sector response to HIV is very much needed.

The WHO European Region's commitment to look beyond the biomedical issues is to be commended and the WFOT affirms that developing strategies to include innovations related to communication, behaviour change, service delivery and economic modelling is a key approach to minimising health and social issues and promoting good quality of life for those living with HIV.

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists strongly agrees with the 5 Strategic Directions and the associated fast track actions. With regards to Strategic Direction 3, the WFOT and COTEC (its European regional group) are willing to work with Member States to build the health workforce capacity in occupational therapy. In many European countries especially in Eastern Europe and central Asia (EECA), where new HIV infections have increased the most between 2005 and 2014, the occupational therapy profession is under developed. The lack of occupational therapists in HIV services will potentially impact on service delivery and effectiveness.

The WFOT believes that occupational therapy, when integrated into HIV services, will help ensure that such services are people centred, accessible, community based and focused on the continuum of HIV care along the life-course. Occupational therapists promote health and well-being through the use of purposeful and meaningful occupations. Occupational therapists are experts in adapting and grading activities and environments to help remove barriers and facilitate full participation and satisfaction in daily life, promoting health and well-being and enabling persons' satisfaction with their quality of life.

In closing, the WFOT and its European member organisations are deeply committed to working with governments at all levels, non-governmental organisations and clients to ensure all people receive the full range of HIV services they need and deserve.

This statement is delivered on behalf of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists by Samantha Shann, Vice President Finance WFOT.

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