

September 24, 2025 | 09:00 – 12:30 EST

Italian Cultural Institute, New York, 686 Park Ave, New York,
NY 10065, United States

(on the sidelines of UNGA High-Level Week)

The Last Mile: Screening, Early Detection, and Treatment, organised in collaboration with the **European Brain Council**, marks the first in a three-part series of high-level policy dialogues held on the sidelines of UNGA80. The Last Mile series has a clear and urgent purpose: to close the persistent gap between innovation and implementation in cancer and other NCDs. Despite remarkable advances in science, far too many patients remain unreached, particularly in the areas of early detection, prevention, brain health, and integrated care for co-morbidities. This series responds to that challenge, following a coherent arc:

1. Italy – Why invest?

2. United Nations – What global framework?
3. Switzerland – How to deliver?

This opening dialogue will underscore the investment and innovation case, showing how cancer, co-morbidities, and brain health serve as proving grounds for prevention, early detection, and treatment. Please be sure not to miss this important dialogue.

The event will also highlight the launch of the new Italian Prevention Hub, a Ministry of Health initiative to strengthen early detection, vaccination, and lifestyle interventions, and to position Italy's prevention strategy in a global context. Importantly, the dialogue will build on outcomes from the **Vision Europe 2030 Conference (Brussels, 2–3 September 2025)**, which showcased how regional collaboration can align prevention, early detection, brain health, and access to innovation with broader policy frameworks—offering a model that can be adapted internationally.

The interactive format will feature short interventions (maximum 2 minutes, no slides), encouraging dynamic exchange and audience engagement. By focusing on breast, lung, melanoma, co-morbidities, and brain health, and by spotlighting combination therapies alongside preventive tools, the session will build a strong case for investment in innovations that save lives, reduce long-term system costs, and strengthen resilience.

The outcome will be a set of concrete, actionable recommendations on how national and international initiatives can align investment in prevention, innovation, and brain health with delivery models that close access gaps—providing momentum for the UN policy dialogue later that day and the Swiss-led implementation session that follows.

09:00 – 09:40 | Welcome and Opening Remarks

This opening frames cancer not in isolation, but as the entry point to a broader NCD agenda, highlighting how closing the “last mile” in cancer – through vaccination, screening, and treatment – also improves outcomes in co-morbidities and brain health. Leaders will underline that the Last Mile is not only a health imperative but also an economic and equity priority, setting the tone for how innovation can be scaled to reach those most in need.

- **Claudio Pagliara**, Director, Italian Cultural Institute
- **Marco Romiti**, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Italy, United Nations
- **Ruggero De Maria**, President, Alliance Against Cancer; Board Member, ICPC
- **Nedim Pipic**, Therapeutic Area Head for Eye Health and Mental Health, Boehringer Ingelheim
- **Marcel Tanner**, President, International Cancer Patient Coalition

Setting the Scientific Scene:

Riccardo Dalla-Favera, Professor of Microbiology & Immunology, Pathology & Cell Biology, and Genetics & Development at Columbia University

Setting the Policy Scene: Denis Horgan, Secretary General, ICPC

Moderator: Phil Hogan, Former EU Commission for Trade

09:40 – 10:20 | Session I – The Investment Case: Early Detection as the Foundation

Prevention and early detection remain the most cost-effective interventions across the cancer and NCD landscape. This session will show how investments in early detection, screening, and brain health interventions reduce long-term system costs while addressing co-morbidities that complicate care. It will highlight financing models that move innovations from pilots to population scale, making the Last Mile argument that every euro invested in prevention delivers multiplied returns in lives saved, resilience strengthened, and costs reduced.

Setting the Scene (5 minutes): Christopher Skedgel, Director, Office of Health Economics

Spotlight speeches (10 minutes):

- **Manal Al-Zadjali**, Secretary General, Oman Cancer Association
- **Barbara Hoffmann**, Chair, ERS Advocacy Council
- **Mohamed Fawzi**, Radiology Advisor to the Minister of Health, Egypt
- **Christa Studzinski**, Head, External Relations & Partnerships, Ontario Brain Institute
- **Michele Mestrinaro**, Global Head of Policy, Novartis
- **Cristol Barrett O'Loughlin**, Founder and CEO, Raregivers

Discussions (20 minutes)

Q&A (10 minutes)

Moderator: Josep Figueras, Director Emeritus, European Observatory on Health Systems & Policies

10:20 – 11:00 | Session II – From Breakthroughs to Access: Scaling Cancer and Brain Health

Breakthroughs in precision oncology, immunotherapy, and combination treatments are transforming survival outcomes in cancers such as breast, lung, and melanoma, while new insights in brain health are reshaping how we approach neurological co-morbidities. Yet, adoption remains uneven – with significant disparities between high-income countries and LMICs. This session will examine how to close the Last Mile gap by embedding these advances into national cancer and NCD strategies, aligning reimbursement, regulatory frameworks, and health system capacity, and ensuring that equitable access to innovation is not the exception but the rule.

Setting the Scene:

- **Vivek Subbiah**, Chief of Early-Phase Drug Development, Sarah Cannon Research Institute
- **Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu**, Founder, MedicAid Cancer Foundation

Panel (25 minutes):

- **Evelyn Gitau**, Chief Scientific Officer, Science for Africa Foundation
- **Donna Walsh**, CEO, International Bureau for Epilepsy
- **Kjeld Hansen**, European Lung Foundation
- **Hesham Elghazaly**, President, Egyptian Cancer Society & Director, MASRI Research Center

Q&A (10 minutes)

Moderator: **Michael Makanga**, CEO, EDCTP

10:50 – 11:00 | Closing the Last Mile requires harmony

Moderator: **Denis Horgan**, Secretary General, International Cancer Patient Coalition

Drawing on the language of music, this segment will show how creativity and leadership can align science, policy, and equity into a shared rhythm – ensuring innovations in cancer and brain health reach every community.

- **Genein Letford**, Chief Executive Officer, Lyrics 'N Leadership Institute / Brainolicious Adventures

11:00 – 11:20 Networking Break

11:20 – 12:00 | Session III – Partnerships that Deliver: Mobilizing Capital and Implementation

Innovation without delivery systems is meaningless – breakthroughs only matter if they reach patients. This session will examine how public-private partnerships (PPPs) can move beyond pilots to deliver vaccines, screening, and combination therapies at scale and with equity. It will focus on integrated care models that address cancer, co-morbidities, and brain health holistically. Speakers will discuss how smarter PPPs can unlock capital, capacity, and collaboration, helping health systems shift from innovation on paper to implementation in practice. By highlighting concrete financing mechanisms, delivery models, and partnerships, the session will show that closing the Last Mile depends on aligning science, policy, and investment to turn innovation into real-world impact.

Setting the Scene:

Jonathan A. Lal, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Dean of the Jacob Institute of Biotechnology and Bioengineering, SHUATS, India

Panel (25 minutes):

- **Maira Caleffi**, Chief of Breast Cancer Center, Núcleo Mama Moinhos
- **Zisis Kozlakidis**, Head of the Laboratory Services and Biobank Group (LSB), IARC
- **Zul Merali**, Director, Brain & Mind Institute, The Aga Khan University, Kenya
- **Elena Moro**, President, European Academy of Neurology

Q&A (10 minutes)

Moderator: **Frédéric Destrebecq**, Executive Director, European Brain Council

11:50 – 12:00 | Building Resilient Minds: Integrating Science, Design, and Policy for Global Impact

Moderator: **Denis Horgan**, Secretary General, International Cancer Patient Coalition

Just as architecture shapes resilient spaces, cancer care needs resilient systems. By uniting science, design, and policy, we can build an “architecture of care” that embeds innovation, strengthens mental health, and ensures breakthroughs translate into lasting global impact.

- **Debbie Beck**, Principal, Global Advisory Services, Perkins&Will

12:00 – 12:40 | Session IV – Beyond Cancer: Tackling the Implementation Gap in Co-morbidities

Patients with cancer and other NCDs often face overlapping challenges such as mental health conditions, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and neurological disorders. Yet too often, advances in one disease area are not matched by integrated approaches across the care pathway, leaving the Last Mile unmet. This session will highlight how lessons from cancer, co-morbidities, and brain health innovation can inform more holistic and patient-centered models of care. By promoting early and coordinated interventions, speakers will explore how to reduce disability, improve quality of life, and ensure true equity in access across the broader NCD and brain health landscape.

Setting the Scene:

Adda Bounedjar, Head of Oncology, Anti Cancer Center Blida University, Algeria

Panel (25 minutes):

- **Bogi Eliassen**, Chair, UNESCO World Bioethics Committee
- **Sameer Zuberi**, Paediatric Neurologist, Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow; Past President, European Paediatric Neurology Society; Board Member, European Brain Council
- **Roberto Grasso**, Psycho-oncologist and researcher, Department of Oncology and Hemato-Oncology, University of Milan
- **Alfred K. Njamnshi**, Founder and Executive Director of Brain Research Africa Initiative (BRAIN)

Q&A (10 minutes)

Moderator: **Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala**, Founding President, ICanServe Foundation

12:40– 13:00 | Closing. The Last Mile

The closing remarks will reinforce the Last Mile rationale: innovation alone is not enough - equity depends on delivery. By linking cancer, co-morbidities, and brain health, this dialogue will generate actionable recommendations to feed into the UN policy session later that day and the Swiss-led implementation dialogue, ensuring the arc from investment to framework to delivery is completed.

- **Marcel Tanner**, President, International Cancer Patient Coalition
- **Ruggero de Maria**, President, Alliance Against Cancer; Board Member, ICPC
- **Riccardo Dalla-Favera**, Professor of Microbiology & Immunology, Pathology & Cell Biology, and Genetics & Development at Columbia University
- **Suzanne L Dickson**, President, European Brain Council
- **Denis Horgan**, Secretary General, ICPC

Moderator: **Josep Figueras**, Director Emeritus, European Observatory on Health Systems & Policies

13:00 – 13:30 | Informal Networking Lunch

The lunch will provide an informal space for dialogue, coalition-building, and next steps. It will allow participants to consolidate insights and prepare joint messages that can be carried into the UNGA80 High-Level Meeting on NCDs and future global dialogues.

13.30: Leave to United Nations Headquarters, New York

Innovate. Detect. Deliver.: The Last Mile: Bridging the Cancer Care Gap with AI, Early Detection, and Equitable Access

September 24, 2025 | 15:00 – 18:00 EST