

The Last Mile: Bridging the Cancer & NCD Innovation Gap with AI, Early Detection, and Equitable Access

September 24, 2025 | 15:00 – 18:00 EST
United Nations Headquarters, New York
Conference Room 5

Hosted by: International Cancer Patient Coalition (ICPC) in collaboration with the **Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations**

This United Nations dialogue, held at the sidelines of the **4th High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and the Promotion of Mental Health and Well-Being**, is the second event in the Last Mile series. The series brings together governments, civil society, and international partners to close gaps in cancer and other NCDs. The first event, hosted by the Italian Mission, opened the series by making the case for investment and innovation. The upcoming final event, with the Swiss Mission, will focus on implementation and rare diseases. Importantly, outcomes from the **Vision Europe 2030 Conference (Brussels, 2–3 September)** feed directly into this UN dialogue, ensuring continuity from European deliberations to global action.

This dialogue, co-hosted by the ICPC in collaboration with the Philippine Mission, will serve as the central policy and consensus platform, where political leaders and health stakeholders will align on a shared framework for action. By directly contributing to the High-Level Meeting, the dialogue will help sharpen commitments and ensure that global pledges translate into practical, equity-driven action.

NCDs – including cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and respiratory illnesses – account for over 70% of global deaths. Health systems, especially in low- and middle-income countries, face overlapping pressures of demographic change, weak infrastructure, and financial barriers that often push many families into hardship. The last mile – the point where innovation reaches those most in need – remains the greatest challenge. Cancer illustrates both the opportunities and inequities we face: while advances in artificial intelligence, digital health, and early detection offer new possibilities, too often breakthroughs remain out of reach for rural and marginalized communities. These same disparities are mirrored across other NCDs, underlining the need for collective, equity-driven solutions.

This dialogue will culminate with the **Consensus Framework: The Last Mile Action Agenda**, structured around three shared priorities:

1. Accelerate Equitable Early Detection
2. Strengthen Partnerships for Access through Education and Capacity Building
3. Mobilize Sustainable Financing

Together, the three events form a coherent arc:

1. Why invest?
- 2. What global framework?**
3. How to deliver?

15:00 – 15:35 | Opening Session – Setting the Stage: Innovation and Equity for Cancer and NCDs

Welcome:

- **Marcel Tanner**, President, International Cancer Patient Coalition (ICPC)

Setting the Scene:

- **Corazon Ngelangel**, President, Philippine Cancer Society
- **Teodoro Javier Herbosa**, Secretary of Health, Philippines
- **Karmen Joller**, Minister of Social Affairs of Estonia
- **Ruggero De Maria**, Board Member & Treasurer, ICPC; President, Alleanza Contro il Cancro (ACC)
- **Denis Horgan**, Secretary General, ICPC

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

15:35– 16:25 | Session I – Early Detection and Health Systems Innovation: From Pilots to People

This session will explore how AI, digital health, and organized screening can transform early detection across cancer and other NCDs. It will focus on equity, ethics, and health system readiness, drawing lessons from global and regional initiatives. While cancer provides an urgent case study, the approaches discussed apply equally to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other NCDs. Insights from **Vision Europe 2030 (Brussels, 2–3 September)** will be integrated, ensuring that European priorities on early detection and system readiness inform globally applicable actions.

- **Jonathan A. Lal**, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dean of the Jacob Institute of Biotechnology and Bioengineering, SHUATS
- **France Dubé**, Director of Global Policy for Precision Medicine and Breast Cancer, AstraZeneca
- **Adda Bounedjar**, Chairman of the Medical Oncology Department, Anti Cancer center Blida University, Algeria
- **Mikhail Maschan**, Deputy General Director – Director, Institute of Hematology, Immunology and Cell Technologies, Dmitry Rogachev National Research Centre, Moscow
- **Sameer Zuberi**, Consultant Paediatric Neurologist, Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow; European Paediatric Neurology Society
- **Vicki Durston**, Director Policy & Advocacy, Breast Cancer Network Australia
- **Jacqueline Bowman**, Founder, Third-i
- **Michael Makanga**, Executive Director, EDCTP
- **Hesham Elghazaly**, President, Egyptian Cancer Society & Director, MASRI Research Center

Country & Policy Respondents:

- **Hilal bin Ali Alsabti**, Minister of Health, Oman
- **Elisabete Weiderpass**, Director, International Agency for Research on Cancer, a part of the World Health Organization (WHO)

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

Rapporteur: **Josep Figueras**, Director Emeritus, European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies
& **Denis Horgan**, Secretary General, ICPC

16:25 – 17:20 | Session II – Partnerships, Capacity & Financing: Turning Innovation into Access

This session will highlight how governments and relevant stakeholders can collaborate to ensure equitable access to innovation. Emphasis will be placed on education, workforce training, and capacity building alongside financing mechanisms that sustain progress for both cancer and NCDs. It will also integrate insights from **Vision Europe 2030 (Brussels, 2–3 September)**, translating European priorities on capacity-building and sustainable financing into globally applicable actions.

- **Mey Boukenna**, Partner, Life Sciences & Healthcare Investments, PagsGroup
- **Zahid Al Mandhari**, Board Member, Oman Cancer Association
- **Mitchell Elkind**, Chief Clinical Science Officer, American Heart Association
- **Lee-Anne Zinetti**, Executive Director, Global Oncology Portfolio Precision Medicine Strategy, Novartis
- **Vivek Subbiah**, Board Member, ICPC; Chief of Early-Phase Drug Development, Sarah Cannon Research Institute, USA
- **Suzanne Dickson**, President, European Brain Council
- **Steve Carnevale**, Founding Partner, Blue Ash Ventures.
- **Don S. Dizon**, Jane F. Desforges Chair in Hematology & Oncology, Tufts University School of Medicine, USA

Country & Policy Respondents:

- Permanent Mission of **South Africa** to the United Nations
- Permanent Mission of **Thailand** to the United Nations, New York
- Permanent Mission of **Malaysia** to the United Nations, New York

Moderator: **Phil Hogan**, Board Member, ICPC; former European Commissioner for Trade, Ireland

Rapporteur: **Maricar Sabeniano**, Philippines Cancer Society

17:20 – 18:00 | Closing Session – Launch of the Consensus Framework: The Last Mile Action Agenda

The meeting concludes with the Consensus Framework: The Last Mile Action Agenda – a shared framework for collective action anchored in three priorities: early detection, capacity building, and sustainable financing. This framework is not a declaration but a practical roadmap for collaboration across governments, civil society, and industry.

The Last Mile Action Agenda – Three Priorities

1. **Accelerate Equitable Early Detection** – scale AI, digital health, and screening programs for cancer & NCDs, prioritizing LMICs.
2. **Strengthen Partnerships for Access through Education and Capacity Building** – empower health systems by training health workers, building institutional capacity, and fostering cross-sector collaboration.
3. **Mobilize Sustainable Financing** – advance pooled procurement, reimbursement reform, and innovative financing mechanisms to sustain equitable access.

Framework Presentation (10 min):

- **Marcel Tanner**, President, ICPC
- **Ruggero De Maria**, Board Member & Treasurer, ICPC; President, ACC
- **Denis Horgan**, Secretary General, ICPC

Political Endorsements (2–3 min each):

- **Hilal bin Ali Alsabti**, Minister of Health, Oman
- **Eirini Agapidaki**, Alternate Minister of Health, Greece
- **Amb. Nacim Gaouaoui**, Deputy Permanent Representative of Algeria to the UN
- **Andrea Piccioli**, Director General of the Italian National Institute of Health (Istituto Superiore di Sanità)
- **Devdutta “Dev” Sangvai**, Secretary for the North Carolina, Department of Health and Human Service, North Carolina
- **Shawn Fluharty**, West Virginia House of Delegates
- Permanent Mission of **Brazil** to the United Nations, New York
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of **Singapore**
- Permanent Mission of **Indonesia** to the United Nations

Civil Society & Health Leaders (2 min each):

- **Corazon Ngelangel**, President, Philippine Cancer Society
- **Alae**, Children Advisory Group, UNICEF

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

Rapporteur: **Phil Hogan**, Board Member, ICPC; former European Commissioner for Trade, Ireland