



The International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) expresses serious concern that the Zero Draft **of the Political Declaration for the UN High-Level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and Mental Health** makes essentially no reference to chronic musculoskeletal conditions, including osteoporosis and related fragility fractures, despite their substantial impact on individuals, health systems, and societies.

Specific point-by-point comments:

Equity and integration: transforming lives and livelihoods through leadership and action on noncommunicable diseases and the promotion of mental health and well-being

Point 1: IOF commends the focus on reducing by one third premature mortality through prevention and treatment, however we note that a commitment to reducing years lived with disability is of equal importance.

Point 5: IOF **strongly recommends** that musculoskeletal conditions are listed along with cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases.

Additional comment: Premature mortality is specified at 70 years, yet already many countries far exceed these projections. Western Europe and similar OECD countries currently have a life expectancy of 81–84 years on average and projections from both the UN and the Global Burden of Disease study suggest a continued rise in global life expectancy, with estimates nearing 77–78 years by 2050.

Point 6: IOF notes that musculoskeletal disorders are linked to depression and anxiety (including fear of falling) due to resulting chronic pain, immobility and isolation.

Point 7: IOF commends the focus on cross-sectoral actions to address modifiable risk factors, as many of these are as strongly linked to musculoskeletal disorders as they are to cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases.

Point 9. IOF **strongly recommends** the addition of the term ‘including for healthy ageing’ within this point, and specifically in reference to the text “long-term poor health preventing people from fulfilling their potential”. Long-term, chronic disability due to musculoskeletal disorders directly leads to loss of potential, affecting the ability to work, contribute to society and to live independently at older age.

Points 15 and 19: Evidence-based rehabilitation is a vitally important intervention for many NCDs, and it should be mentioned alongside prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment and care. IOF **strongly recommends** that “rehabilitation” be reflected in both these points.

Point 22: IOF fully agrees on the need to prioritize affordable, evidence-based actions for progress that build on demonstrative successes. IOF notes that evidence-based osteoporosis management, including the implementation of Fracture Liaison Services to prevent secondary

fractures, have demonstrated clear success in improving patient outcomes and preventing fractures.

Point 23: We commend this point and note that addressing multimorbidity is of particular importance in regard to osteoporosis and fragility fracture prevention. Cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases requiring the use of corticosteroids are clear risk factors.

Create health-promoting environments through action across government

IOF commends and agrees with these recommendations as they will benefit bone and muscle health.

Strengthen primary healthcare

Point 30: IOF strongly recommends the specific mention of ‘musculoskeletal conditions’ in subsection (i), alongside hypertension, diabetes, cancers, and depression.

After Point 35: IOF **strongly recommends the addition of a separate point** referring specifically to musculoskeletal conditions and fragility fracture prevention:

Prevent fragility fractures due to osteoporosis by scaling up access to diagnosis and treatment, and by supporting the development of Fracture Liaison Services that directly serve fracture patients, while facilitating the link between these services and primary care.

Increase sustainable financing

IOF commends and agrees with these recommendations as they will benefit people with musculoskeletal conditions.

Strengthen governance

IOF commends and agrees with these recommendations as they will benefit people with musculoskeletal conditions.

Strengthen data and surveillance to monitor progress and hold ourselves accountable

Points 49 and 50: In view of the growing burden of musculoskeletal conditions in ageing populations, IOF recommends that these point reflect the need for systematic data collection and analysis on healthy life expectancy, measures of functional ability and intrinsic capacity, as well as hip fracture registries.

