

**IAPO Intervention: 9.7 Promoting physical activity in the South–East Asia Region SEA/RC69/15  
69<sup>th</sup> Session of WHO South-East Asia Regional Committee Colombo, Sri Lanka 5–9 September 2016**

Speaker: IAPO South East Asia Board Member: Bejon Misra

Thank you Chair, honourable members, distinguished delegates.

The International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO) is an alliance of patient groups in official relationship with the WHO and representing the interests of patients worldwide. Our 276 member organizations are based in more than 70 countries covering over 50 different disease areas and conditions.

IAPO firstly congratulates all Member States in the Region who are supporting and facilitating the attendance of disabled-athletes to the 2016 Rio Paralympics and the Olympiad. Patient-centred sports infrastructure and programmes are very important for our member organizations as patient engagement in sports, under the advisement of their health professionals, is very important for their health and well-being.

Insufficient physical activity (PA) is a leading risk factor for worsening of morbidity and increase in mortality of many patients with NCDs in the Region. IAPO reinforces WHO South-East Asia Regional report's findings that promoting physical activity is a cost-effective approach and has a long-term impact on healthy lifestyles for patients, communities and the entire populations, when applied strategically and implemented effectively in all settings and across all walks of life.

Member States need to collaborate with patient organizations and take a multisectoral approach when promoting and operationalizing patient-centred physical activity policies, plans and strategies in the region. Member States must put into place appropriate measurable targets to reduce physical inactivity and sedentary lifestyles particularly within their patient communities. IAPO would also like to stress that traditional and rural sport initiatives must be integrated within rural community health workers programmes in the region to reach all.

Thank you for your attention.