



World Hearing Forum stakeholders' meeting
Concept note
27-28 November 2023

Background

Unaddressed hearing loss is the third largest cause of years lived with disability globally, and at least 430 million people experience disabling levels of hearing loss. Hearing loss, and related ear diseases, when not managed suitably, can have far-reaching consequences on the lives of those affected, their families and economies. Annually, nearly US\$ 1 trillion are estimated to be lost due to our collective failure to adequately address hearing loss.

The WHA70.13 resolution on 'Deafness and hearing loss' adopted in 2017 has drawn attention to these facts and the WHO *World report on hearing* has proposed integration of people-centred ear and hearing care into national health plans for universal health coverage. The report outlines a life course approach to preventing and addressing hearing loss. It recommends the integration of hearing care into all related health initiatives, such as care of older people or child health. To facilitate this integration at country level, WHO has developed a set of technical tools and advocacy resources, and supports countries in their implementation.

Given the need and importance of awareness raising and advocacy in the field of ear and hearing care, WHO has set up the World Hearing Forum (WHF). The main objectives of the Forum are to raise awareness about the importance of hearing and to advocate for integration of EHC within health services across the life course.

To inform stakeholders about WHO's activities on ear and hearing care, and to learn their perspectives, WHO is organizing a stakeholder meeting with the **objectives** to:

1. Update stakeholders on the work and initiatives of the WHO Programme for ear and hearing care (EHC).
2. Identify opportunities for integration of EHC into public health initiatives across the life course, including primary health care.
3. Outline strategies for raising awareness on and advocating for ear and hearing care at local, regional, and global levels.
4. Introduce the World Hearing Forum and its activities.

Date:

27-28 November 2023

Mode:

In person with option for online participation

Location:

WHO HQ, Geneva, Switzerland

Language:

English, with captioning

Participants:

- Members of the World Hearing Forum
- Representatives from ministries of health
- Representation from permission missions in Geneva
- Key stakeholders including representatives of professional associations, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions and publications, user groups, and private sector entities.
- WHO HQ, regional, and country offices

Expected Outcomes:

- Greater understanding among stakeholders about WHO's vision and work in the field of ear and hearing care.
- Opportunities identified for integration of ear and hearing care across the life course through multi-stakeholder engagement.
- Enhanced collaboration and networking among stakeholders in the ear and hearing care sector.

