

WHO Executive Board: 139th session **May 2016**

EB139/4 Improving Access to Assistive Technology; report by the Secretariat

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) representing occupational therapists worldwide affirms its support for the activities being undertaken through the GATE initiative and fully supports the goal to improve access to high-quality affordable assistive products globally.

As occupational therapists we acknowledge that the lack of access to assistive products can be a barrier to independence and participation. Assistive products can optimise human performance throughout the life course allowing individuals to assume or regain valued life roles, enjoy better health, especially in terms of functioning and provide greater opportunities for societal participation.

Occupational Therapists play an important role in the assessment for and provision of assistive products and as such are in a prominent position to help raise awareness about the need for assistive products including the training of personnel.

The Priority Assistive Products List is a powerful directive that will set the standard for assistive products which must be available in a health system at all times. The development of an assistive technology policy framework is essential to provide guidance to Member States regarding financing mechanisms and service provision.

In conclusion, occupational therapists can offer expert knowledge and practical solutions to both the GATE initiative and improving access to assistive technology. The WFOT and its member organisations are committed to working with the World Health Organization, governments, non-governmental organisations, communities and individuals to assist with operationalizing the four areas of policy products, personnel and provision highlighted in the report.

Yours sincerely



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