

## **ILAE-IBE Joint Statement on International Epilepsy Day 2025**

*February 10, 2025* – Today, on International Epilepsy Day, the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) and the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) unite to call for accelerated implementation of the World Health Organization's Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and other Neurological Disorders (IGAP).

IGAP, unanimously adopted by WHO member states, provides a critical framework for improving access to treatment, care, and quality of life for people with epilepsy, their caregivers, and families.

One of the major global targets of IGAP states that, by 2031, countries will have increased service coverage for epilepsy by 50%.

“Worldwide less than one in five people have epilepsy, so around only 10 million people have access to treatment for their seizures,” says Prof Helen Cross, President of the International League Against Epilepsy “This means that at least 40 million people with epilepsy don’t despite epilepsy being a treatable brain disorder. We urgently need to expand epilepsy services and ensure that everyone has access to the treatments we know work and which, in many cases, are also very cheap.”

The second, epilepsy-specific global target states that, by 2031, 80% of countries will have developed or updated their legislation with a view to promoting and protecting the human rights of people with epilepsy.

"We commend the WHO for ensuring IGAP highlights but goes beyond, the medical needs of people with epilepsy, taking an intersectoral, person-centred approach," says Dr. Francesca Sofia, IBE President. "Our [Global Epilepsy Needs Study](#), gathering insights from over 6,000 individuals affected by epilepsy, reveals significant challenges

in areas such as employment, education, mental health, and social inclusion. These findings reinforce the urgent need for intersectoral collaboration to address the multifaceted impact of epilepsy."

This year's International Epilepsy Day theme, "The Epilepsy Journey," has been chosen to further spotlight the lived experiences of individuals with epilepsy and their caregivers. This focus underscores the importance of incorporating their voices into driving meaningful change and improving outcomes worldwide.

"Epilepsy treatment and care must facilitate the full inclusion and participation of people with epilepsy and their caregivers in all aspects of society," emphasize Prof. Cross and Dr. Sofia. "Addressing medical and social needs must go hand-in-hand."

On this International Epilepsy Day, ILAE and IBE reaffirm their commitment to collaborating with global partners to improve the quality of life for people with epilepsy everywhere. We urge governments, healthcare professionals, researchers, and community organizations to join us in accelerating the implementation of IGAP and making a tangible difference in the lives of millions affected by epilepsy.