

International Women Leaders Call on Policy Makers to Improve Support of Osteoporosis Diagnosis and Proven Therapies

May 11, 2002, Lisbon Portugal, this 'Call to Action' is led by Her Majesty Queen Rania of Jordan, Patron of the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) and is announced from the 1st IOF Women Leaders' Roundtable hosted by the IOF. It is signed by patrons and members of the Roundtable.

Today, osteoporosis touches one in three women over the age of 50, causing pain, disability, loss of independence and even death. Osteoporosis results in more disability than many other diseases such as stroke, heart attacks and breast cancer. Early diagnosis and proven therapies can help women at risk maintain healthier bones and those with the disease avoid the suffering associated with additional fractures. Yet, in numerous countries today, diagnostic tests and treatment are restricted to people who have already suffered a fracture. The economic cost of osteoporosis is also huge, the annual direct cost of treating osteoporosis fractures in Europe and the United States alone is at least USD 27 billion (Euro 30 billion).

Call to Action

We, the patrons and members of the Women Leaders' Roundtable, and the IOF are urging policymakers around the world to make the diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis a priority on public health agendas. We recognise that health inequity is a global problem and that developing countries face special challenges but, insofar as they can, we urge policymakers to consider carefully the following recommendations:

- Pay for bone density scans and improve the availability of bone densitometry machines for people with osteoporosis risk factors **before** the first fracture.

In a number of countries, support for diagnostic tests (such as DXA) is limited to those who have already experienced a bone fracture. Yet 20% of women will experience a subsequent fracture within the first year of having a vertebral fracture – known as the fracture cascade. By providing access to these tests for women at risk, we will prevent them from suffering fractures.

- Pay for proven therapies for people with osteoporosis **before** the first fracture.

Once a fracture occurs, there is an increased likelihood of additional fractures within the first year – known as the fracture cascade. Early diagnosis of osteoporosis and prevention of this first fracture would greatly reduce the economic burden on governments for treating osteoporotic fractures.

The patrons and members of the Women Leaders' Roundtable will act as osteoporosis ambassadors in their respective countries and regions to strongly support these changes. Where health systems cannot afford all of them now, we will urge policymakers to do all they can to prioritise osteoporosis. We urge women, physicians and all concerned people around the world to help us bring about these changes. The Roundtable will reconvene in two years to monitor progress.

Today, osteoporosis can be easily prevented and effectively treated. We call upon government leaders and policy makers around the world to act now to improve access to osteoporosis diagnosis and proven therapies, thereby improving the lives of millions of women today and ensuring a better future for millions more.

*First IOF Women Leaders' Roundtable
May 11, 2002 Lisbon, Portugal*

Roundtable Patrons:



Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan, IOF Patron



Mrs. Nazek Rafic Hariri, First IOF Ambassador and President of IOF's 206: A Bone Fund



Mrs. Camilla Parker Bowles, President of the National Osteoporosis Society, United Kingdom

Roundtable Members:



Maxine McKew, Journalist, Interviewer and Writer, Patron of Osteoporosis **Australia**



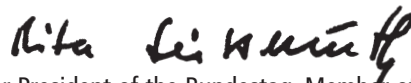
Regina Prado, Osteoporosis Patient and Advocate, **Brazil**



Maureen McTeer, Medical Law Specialist & Author, Spokesperson, Osteoporosis Society of **Canada**



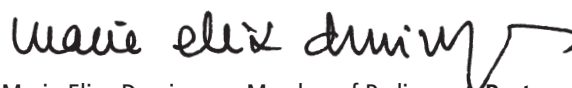
Imelda Read, Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the EP Osteoporosis Interest Group, **European Union**



Rita Süßmuth, Former President of the Bundestag, Member of Parliament, **Germany**



Anna Molinari, Fashion Designer, Osteoporosis Advocate, **Italy**



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Ann Richards, Former Governor of Texas and Osteoporosis Spokesperson, **USA**