

SUSTAINABILITY OF HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP GLOBAL SELF-CARE FEDERATION

Defining Self-Care

World Health Organization Definition:

The ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider.

Self-care refers to the holistic activities, practices, and products—both medicinal, devices, and nutritive—that a person can adopt to improve their health and well-being. In particular, self-care involves:

- Making healthy lifestyle choices
- Avoiding unhealthy lifestyle habits
- Making responsible use of prescription and non-prescription medicines
- Self-recognition of symptoms
- Self-monitoring
- Self-management

The Global Self-Care Federation is seeking to develop a Self-Care Readiness Index to: 1) identify and discuss the critical enablers for “self-care readiness” in a health system (the “checklist” approach); and 2) measure the self-care readiness of a diverse set of health systems from around the world, applauding existing progress and identifying opportunities for improvement.

A key step in creating the Index is to define the self-care enablers – the broad elements that are necessary for self-care to achieve its potential in a given health system. Each enabler will cover multiple indicators that further segment that area. This document provides greater detail on the definition of each of the enablers and indicators, incorporating input from the Working Group.

SELF-CARE ENABLER AND INDICATOR DEFINITIONS

****Note on Index Methodology:* The data for different indicators in the Index will be based primarily on input from a range of relevant stakeholders, gathered through surveys, interviews, and other mechanisms. This input will then be assigned numerical values, weighted, and analyzed to produce a final “score.” Therefore, while the descriptions of the enablers and indicators are qualitative, the final data in the Index will be quantitative. Find a full list of research modalities per enabler in Annex 1.

Enabler 1: Stakeholder Support and Adoption

Support among a wide range of stakeholders is essential to maximizing the adoption and value of self-care products and behaviors. This enabler will assess levels of support and adoption among patients and consumers, healthcare providers, and regulators and policymakers.

- **Healthcare providers trust and support self-care:** The extent to which healthcare providers support, value, and adopt self-care products and behaviors, providing useful,

accurate information to patients and recommending self-care products and practices for prevention and first-line treatment.

- **Patients and consumers trust and support self-care, understanding the complementary power of medicinal self-care:** The extent to which members of the general public support self-care products and behaviors and choose to improve their health utilization self-care products.
- **Patients and consumers trust and support self-care, understanding the complementary power of non-medicinal self-care:** The extent to which members of the general public support self-care products and behaviors and choose to improve their health utilization self-care products and practices.
- **Regulators and policymakers have an understanding of self-care:** The extent to which policymakers and regulators are familiar with the term “self-care” and can articulate its health and cost-saving benefits.

Enabler 2: Consumer & Patient Empowerment

Self-care products and practices deliver the greatest value when consumers and patients are empowered to understand their health, make their own health decisions, and use self-care products confidently. This enabler will assess the drivers necessary for informed, empowered consumers, including health literacy, access to information, and a focus on prevention.

- **Access to personal health data:** The extent to which individuals can easily access their own health data, with self-care products and practices included in health records (paper and electronic) alongside details on prescriptions.
- **Consumer health literacy:** The extent to which a country's government systematically strives to improve the health literacy of its people, and the extent to which consumers understand their own health, the risks, symptoms and treatments for common health conditions, and the role that self-care products and practices can play in both preventing and treating these conditions.
- **Innovative digital offerings:** The extent to which the self-care industry develops and provides novel digital tools, such as online platforms to order self-care products, digital diagnostics, mobile self-assessment tools, wearables, and telehealth services.¹
- **Productive innovation to meet consumer demand:** The extent to which the self-care industry continually develops and refines products to meet consumers’ preferences, needs, and expectations.

¹ Note: This indicator will not be evaluated at a country-by-country level. Instead, it will be addressed via a call-out box talking about the role of digital offerings in removing barriers to the uptake of self-care products and practices.

Enabler 3: Self-Care Health Policy

Health policy plays a critical role in the adoption of self-care products by consumers and patients, healthcare providers, and health systems. This enabler will assess policymakers' perceptions and decisions related to self-care, including recognition of self-care products' and practices' economic value, data- and science-based policy decisions, policies to promote self-care as an affordable health solution, and value-based reimbursement.

- **Policies to promote self-care as affordable health solution:** The extent to which a health system utilizes reimbursement, tax credits, or other policy mechanisms to lower the out-of-pocket cost of self-care products, recognizing their total value to the system.
- **Provider reimbursement:** The extent to which a country's health policy promotes value- and outcomes-based care, instead of reimbursing healthcare providers for patient visits or services provided.
- **Recognition of economic value of self-care:** The extent to which policymakers recognize, discuss, and promote the economic value of self-care products and practices for health systems and the economy, including their potential for prevention, better resource utilization, and worker productivity.
- **Transparent policy decisions with clear rationale:** The extent to which policymakers' decisions are transparent and based on a clear, fact-based rationale, including information about self-care's cost savings, safety, and efficacy. This is especially relevant for key regulatory and policy decisions, such as moving a product from OTC to prescription (switch and reverse switch).

Enabler 4: Regulatory

Regulations determine the ability of the self-care industry to drive innovation, empower consumers, and realize the value of its medicinal, non-medicinal, nutritive, and device products for the health system. This enabler will assess key aspects of regulation, including the ability of companies to advertise and distribute their products and regulatory approval processes.

- **Access and distribution:** The extent to which regulations enable self-care companies to distribute their medicinal and non-medicinal products through a range of channels, including in-store and online, while supporting safety and credibility, as relevant and appropriate by product offering.
- **Advertising:** The extent to which regulations enable self-care companies to freely and easily advertise their medicinal and non-medicinal products to consumers, while supporting safety and credibility, as relevant and appropriate by medicinal, non-medicinal, nutritive, and device offering.

- **Approval processes:** The extent to which regulators adopt standardized approval processes and timelines, inclusive of content requirements that are flexible enough to consider safety and efficacy data.
- **Nutrition and health claims:** The extent to which a regulatory framework meets the need to empower consumers to make healthier and diversified choices, ensuring claims to be evidence-based, current, and reasonable while providing a level playing field for businesses to operate fairly and efficiently in markets.

SELF-CARE READINESS INDEX: GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS & SCOPE

In an effort to be reflective of global concerns and in line with broader policy conversations on issues such as universal health coverage and the management of non-communicable diseases, the Self-Care Readiness Index will endeavor to include an evaluation of at least one country per each of the WHO's six regions. WHO's current regional groupings are as follows: African Region, Region of the Americas, South-East Asia Region, European Region, Eastern Mediterranean Region, and Western Pacific Region.

A set of criteria have been developed to support the identification of specific countries for measurement in the Self-Care Readiness Index:

- ❖ The full set of countries for inclusion ought to include a diverse range of developed and less-developed self-care markets to enable fruitful comparison;
- ❖ Countries must demonstrate adequate and accessible documentation on self-care policies and practices to facilitate sufficient measurement within the Index's research framework;
- ❖ Countries ought to be of strategic interest to the self-care industry;
- ❖ And, countries must have resources available in English to facilitate primary and secondary research efforts.

Based on this set of criteria, the following list of 10 countries for inclusion in the Self-Care Readiness Index has been compiled for consideration:

- Brazil
- China
- Egypt
- France
- Nigeria
- Poland
- South Africa
- Thailand
- United Kingdom
- United States