NGO CSW-GENEVA | WORKING GROUP ON HEALTH

Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2026

From awareness to action. From commitment to accountability.

As October draws to a close, breast cancer awareness must not end. For millions of women and families, the challenge continues every day. Behind every diagnosis is a person, a family and a future that deserves protection.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide. There were approximately 2.4 million diagnoses and 694,000 deaths in 2024. Yet the burden is not shared equally: timely diagnosis and effective treatment remain out of reach for too many women.

41%	87%
Five-year survival in low-income countries	Five-year survival in high-income countries

Indicative WHO figures; survival varies considerably within countries and regions.

In parts of sub-Saharan Africa and other underserved settings, late diagnosis, costs of care, shortages of specialists and limited access to pathology, surgery, radiotherapy and medicines can turn a treatable disease into a fatal one. Conflict, displacement and rural isolation deepen these barriers.

These inequalities are not inevitable — and they are not acceptable.

The response is clear: strengthen breast health awareness and primary care; ensure rapid diagnosis and affordable, complete treatment; invest in trained health workers and essential services; and use disaggregated data to identify women being left behind. The WHO Global Breast Cancer Initiative calls for a 2.5% annual reduction in breast cancer mortality, with the potential to avert 2.5 million deaths by 2040.

Our joint statement to CSW71 calls us to move beyond promises towards implementation, measurable results and accountability by 2030. Breast cancer care is a test of that commitment — and women must help shape the decisions, resources and services affecting their lives.

Where a woman lives should not determine whether she survives.

Nothing about women's health without women.

Sources: Working Group on Health for Breast Cancer Awareness Month (2026); joint statement to CSW71 (2026); WHO Global Breast Cancer Initiative. For country maps: IARC Global Cancer Observatory, gco.iarc.who.int/today/.