

A UN High Level Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases

NCD Alliance Information Sheet

WHAT IS A UN SUMMIT?

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The UN General Assembly, the principal decision-making body of the UN which represent all UN member states, has decided to hold a UN High-Level Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in order to bring global attention to these diseases and agree on a plan of action to address them.

What is the focus of the summit?

In May 2009, UN member states passed UN resolution 64/265, stating that the meeting will focus on the 'four most prominent non-communicable diseases, namely, cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes', and the 'common risk factors of tobacco use, alcohol abuse, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and environmental carcinogens.'

Who is it being organised by?

The UN High-Level Summit on NCDs will be organized under the direction of the UN General Assembly, with the support of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The logistics will be organized by the UN Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM).

When and where will it take place?

The meeting will take place at UN Headquarters in New York on 19-20th September 2011 before the opening of the main UN General Assembly Session on 21st September.

Why is it important?

The Summit is the biggest and best opportunity to put NCDs on the global agenda. It has the potential to secure commitment from Heads of Government for a coordinated global response to NCDs, substantially increase financial resources for NCDs and save millions from premature death and debilitating health complications.

HOW WAS IT DECIDED?

When was the decision made to hold the Summit?

On May 13th 2010, the UN General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), calling for a UN High-Level Summit on NCDs to be held in September 2011. In total, 130 states cosponsored the resolution, signalling that the world has recognized the urgency and priority of addressing the growing threat posed by diabetes and other NCDs.

Who made the decision to hold a summit? The Resolution calling for the Summit was proposed by the Caribbean Group of States (CARICOM), a grouping of 15 countries from the Caribbean. CARICOM secured support for the Summit over a period of several months leading up to the vote, which ensured the vote had unanimous support and over 130 co-sponsors.

Who were the key parties involved in securing the summit?

In addition to UN member states, many other stakeholders played a key role in securing support for the Summit. The NCD Alliance, formed by the The International Diabetes Federation (IDF), International Union Against TB and Lung Disease (The Union), Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), and the World Heart Federation (WHF), have led the civil society campaign for a UN High-Level Summit on NCDs since June 2009. The NCD Alliance's 880 member associations were essential to securing government support for the Summit. Many members formed national coalitions to lobby their governments and secure the necessary support.

WHAT ARE THE DETAILS?

What will the format of the Summit be?

On 23 December 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a Modalities Resolution outlining the details and agenda for the UN Summit. The following details were agreed by member states:

- UN Summit will be a two day meeting taking place on 19-20th September 2011 (at the UN in New York);
- Adoption of a concise action-oriented outcome document by Member States at the close of the Summit;
- UN Member States should be represented at the Summit by Heads of State or Heads of Government;
- UN Member States should include civil society in their national delegations to the Summit;
- Three thematic roundtables will be held during the UN Summit covering:
 - Incidence and impact;
 - National capacity policy, prevention and control;
 - International cooperation and coordination
- The President of the General Assembly to organize interactive civil society consultations prior to June 2011 which will input into the Summit Outcomes Document;
- A representative of civil society will address the Summit during the opening session;

Who will be there?

The meeting will be attended by Heads of State, Ministers and other government representatives, civil society, the private sector, academia, and other stakeholders.

Who are the key member states driving preparations for the Summit?

Luxemburg and Jamaica have been appointed as the meetings co-facilitators and will lead consultations with UN member states and oversee the process of drafting an outcomes document to be agreed by member states in the months leading up to the UN Summit. CARICOM states will be key influencers as the grouping that led the campaign for the Summit within the UN. Russia will hold a Ministerial Conference on NCDs on 27-28 April 2011 and will be a key member state.

What is the role of the World Health Organization?

WHO is expected to support Member States, UN Regional Commissions, other UN Offices, Funds and Programmes, the World Bank and other relevant stakeholders in holding consultations as part of the preparatory process for the Summit. For further information on the role of the WHO, please refer to the information note WHO has produced for the UN High-Level Summit at http://www.who.int/nmh/events/2011/ncd_summit/en/index.html.

WHY IS A NCD SUMMIT SIGNIFICANT?

An NCD Summit will be highly significant for the NCD community because such an event can lead to firm commitments by governments that are to be reported on periodically. NGOs can also be asked to submit shadow reports giving their perspectives on priorities and solutions. Furthermore, such a high-level event can be the catalyst for major change at a global level with positive impact for people living with NCDs and their risk factors. Ensuring that major change results from the summit requires concerted effort by all sectors in the lead-up to the event in order to agree specific measurable outcomes and results. Civil society has a critical role to play in shaping the agenda and in delivering concrete outcomes in partnership with governments and communities.

KEY ADVOCACY ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL UN SUMMIT ON NCDs

- **Act** to get your voice heard. Between now and the high level meeting, country Missions to the UN in New York will negotiate an Outcome Document to be presented and approved at the Summit in September. Keep building a relationship with like-minded NGOs and your Foreign Affairs Ministry to help influence the negotiation process over the next six months. Civil society has a vital part to play in shaping the outcomes of the UN Summit.
- **Request** the highest level of official representation at the UN Summit. This is a meeting of Heads of State and Heads of Government, and their attendance is essential to ensure the Summit achieves the highest level of political support and attracts the world's attention.
- **Urge** your government to include representatives of civil society in their delegations to the UN Summit as suggested in the Modalities Resolution. You can contact other organizations in your country to develop a common strategy for this advocacy effort.
- **Influence** your government's participation at the UN Summit by shaping their statements prior to the meeting. It is vital that the unique perspectives and experience of the civil society sector are included in these preparations and deliberations.
- **Support us in calling for:**
 - The establishment of a Civil Society Taskforce under the Office of the President of the General Assembly to ensure active involvement of civil society in the lead up to the UN Summit;
 - The appointment of a high-level focal point within the UN to lead the process, as was the case in the HIV/AIDS Summit in 2001;
 - A UN Decade of Action on NCDs as a key outcome of the UN Summit and support for a follow-up Summit on NCDs in three or four years time to review progress and commitments.

NCD ALLIANCE KEY 'ASKS' FROM THE SUMMIT

The NCD Alliance's specific 'asks' from the UNS is an Outcome Statement which leads to the following outcomes:

1. Governments to be accountable and measured on NCD plans
2. Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to be fully implemented
3. A global commitment to prevent the preventable
4. Globally agreed approaches to NCD treatment and care
5. Resources to deliver NCD interventions
6. NCDs in the MDG successor goals

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The NCD Alliance will drive forward five areas of work leading up to and following the UNS by:

1. Leading a civil society movement for NCDs
2. Producing evidence based arguments to support the NCD cause
3. Acting as the global voice of our members and people with NCDs
4. Creating a Global Plan for NCDs and sharing innovative solutions and best practices
5. Working with NGOs, governments and businesses to take forward NCD Alliance key 'asks' for and from the Summit

WHERE CAN I FIND FURTHER INFORMATION?

- Regular updates will be posted on the NCD Alliance website at www.ncdalliance.org.
- Visit the UN General Assembly President's website for the Summit at <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/65/issues/ncdiseases.shtml>
- Visit the World Health Organization website for the Summit at http://www.who.int/nmh/events/2011/ncd_summit/en/index.html
- Further information can be found in 'The NCD Alliance Plan for the United Nations Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases' (available on the NCD Alliance website).
- Interested NGOs are invited to join the NCD Alliance Common Interest Group which will provide regular updates on the UN Summit and hold teleconferences briefings. Please e-mail info@ncdalliance.org if you are interest in joining this group.