

Statement for the UN High Level Meeting September 2011 New York

WHO SEARO MEETING HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES JAKARTA, 1-4 MARCH 2011

Read by Ms Ranjit Pritam Singh, UICC

Breast Cancer Welfare Association Malaysia, Chronic Care Foundation India, Framework Convention Alliance, Family Health International, Global Health Council, HRIDAY (Health Related Information Dissemination Amongst Youth), Indonesian Cancer Foundation, Indonesian Diabetes Association, Indonesian Heart Foundation, Indonesian Society of Health Promoters and Educators, Livestrong, National Heart Foundation of Bangladesh, Pain and Palliative Care Society India, Population Services International, Reach to Recovery International, Thai NCD Net and the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) as members and partners of the global NCD Alliance representing over 880 NCD organizations from across the globe, wish to commend the WHO Office for South-East Asia for organizing this important regional meeting and consultation on Health and Development Challenges of Non-Communicable Diseases. This is a critical opportunity to define our priorities for the UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs taking place this September.

To ensure we make the most of this unprecedented opportunity, the NCD Alliance and other civil society coalitions are driving a global civil society movement united in addressing cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes, and their common risk factors of tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol. Together with our partners, we represent over 1,200 organizations across the globe.

NCDs have been a silent killer for too long. They are a major cause of poverty, a barrier to economic development, and a serious threat to achievement of the MDGs. The 8 million premature deaths they cause each year in low and middle-income countries represent nothing less than a development emergency in slow motion. NCDs have no borders or boundaries– they are the world's number one killer and devastate the bottom billion and G20 countries alike.

Ladies and gentlemen, the NCD Alliance commits to supporting member states, WHO and UNDESA in catalysing this process and calls on member states to:

- One: Ensure the highest level of political support, we ask that you request the attendance of your Head of State or Head of Government.

- Two: Support the strong participation of civil society in the UN High-Level Meeting. The imminent appointment of a Civil Society Taskforce under the office of the President of the General Assembly is a welcome development. In addition, we urge the appointment of a high-profile NCD Champion under the UN to liaise with the Taskforce and the private sector, to act as a special envoy for the UN High-Level Meeting, and to work closely with those UN and WHO staff responsible for organising and coordinating the UN High-Level Meeting.
- Three: Invest in the consultation process leading up to the UN High-Level Meeting to ensure that the meeting produces an outcomes document with strong recommendations and a concrete plan of international action. This should include:
 - Acknowledgement of the health, social and economic burden of NCDs in the world and particularly in low- and middle-income countries;
 - an increase in the international development funds to NCD prevention and control, including support for international instruments such as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control;
 - Measures that address the availability and affordability of quality medicines to ensure that people living with NCDs can access life-saving treatments; and,
 - Agreement on global accountability, monitoring, reporting, and follow-up mechanisms.

The UN High-Level Meeting is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put NCDs on the global agenda. It has the potential to secure commitment from Heads of Government for a coordinated response, substantially increase resources, and save millions from premature death and debilitating health complications. Together with strong leadership from the WHO and its Member States, we can make significant progress in curtailing this epidemic. Join us in ensuring the UN High-Level Meeting is the turning point for NCDs.