NCD Alliance welcomes new WHO/WEF reports on tackling rising disease burden

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New York – The NCD Alliance, a network of more than 2,000 non-government organizations tackling non-communicable diseases (NCDs), today welcomed two new studies aimed at helping decision makers in low- and middle-income countries reduce the growing burden of NCDs.

The two studies, launched together the day before the UN High-Level Meeting (UNHLM) on NCDs, include:

• A global analysis of the economic impact of NCDs, by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the Harvard School of Public Health, that estimates economic losses of nearly $500 billion a year

• An analysis of the costs of scaling up a core intervention package to prevent and treat NCDs in low- and middle-income countries by the World Health Organization (WHO) that will cost less than $12 billion a year "What these studies show us is that the most basic package of prevention and control measures is affordable, even for poor countries," said Ann Keeling, Chair of the NCD Alliance. "But the cost of not tackling these growing killers is inestimably higher than the cost of acting now." The WHO report would be an essential tool, Keeling said, to help government officials work out what resources they need to run basic essential programmes.

However she noted it included measures ignored in the draft Political Declaration due to be adopted tomorrow at the UNHLM on NCDs, such as measures to regulate the price, availability and marketing of alcohol.

The NCD Alliance is also campaigning for increases in tobacco tax to save lives and provide governments with funds that can be invested in health. "Governments today raise more than $100 billion a year from tobacco taxes" said Dr Nils Billo, Executive Director of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. "A mere 2 per cent increase in current tobacco taxes would raise $2 billion or more."

The joint summary of both reports that a 10 per cent reduction in deaths from ischaemic heart disease and stroke would reduce economic losses in low- and middle- income countries by $25 billion a year – about three times the cost of scaling up core interventions for cardiovascular disease which are put at $8 billion a year.

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Notes to Editors: • The NCD Alliance is a network of over 2,000 non-government organizations from over 170 countries focusing on NCDs • New reports on NCDs released www.ncdalliance.org/reports [2]

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