World Health Organization welcomes the adoption of UN Resolution on Non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

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Dr Ala Alwan, Assistant Director-General for Noncommunicable Diseases & Mental Health at the World Health Organization, has welcomed the adoption of the UN Resolution on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) passed by the UN General Assembly. The following statement was released by Dr Alwan:

Statement:

'As you may be aware, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution last night on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), which seeks to halt the increasing trends in premature deaths from NCDs worldwide, with a particular focus on developing countries.

The resolution builds on objective 1 of the NCD Global Strategy Action Plan 2008-2013, which calls on global development initiatives to take into account the prevention and control of NCDs and raise the priority accorded to NCD in development work at global and national levels.

The resolution calls on Member States and the international community to:

- convene a high-level meeting of the General Assembly in September 2011, with the participation of Heads of State and Government, on the prevention and control of NCDs;
- include at the high-level plenary meeting to review the MDGs in September 2010, discussions on the rising incidence and the socio-economic impact of NCDs in developing countries; and
- request the UN Secretary-General to prepare a global status report on NCDs, with a particular focus on the developmental challenges faced by developing countries.

This initiative comes on the heels of the Ministerial Declaration adopted at ECOSOC High-level Segment in July 2009, which calls for urgent action to implement the NCD Global Strategy Action Plan endorsed by the World Health Assembly in May 2008.

The "Doha Declaration on NCDs and Injuries" issued by the participants of the ECOSOC/UNESCWA/WHO Western Asia Ministerial Meeting organized in May 2009 under the leadership of the Prime-Minister of Qatar, underlines the importance of raising the priority accorded to NCD in development work at global and national levels.

In his address during the General Debate of the 64th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2009, the Prime-Minister of Trinidad and Tobago then called on the Assembly to convene a high-level meeting on NCDs at the earliest opportunity.

This was followed by a statement on Commonwealth action to combat NCDs issued at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November 2009.

Introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in the UN General Assembly yesterday, the representative of Trinidad and Tobago said that NCDs accounted for 60 per cent of all deaths globally but had not received the level of attention, coordination or funding that reflected their staggering mortality rate and socio-economic impact in developing countries.

The representatives of Spain (on behalf of the EU) and the US welcomed the adoption after the vote. Spain's representative, pledging EU's action, said that many of the diseases under discussion were avoidable and that activities should focus on reinforcing preventive measures. He considered WHO to play a major role in developing and utilizing standardized indicators.

The representative of the US said it was committed to reducing the threat of NCDs through initiatives of the First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, and support to actions by other countries in a way that was complementary to the global strategies of the WHO.

As we push for solutions to the greatest public health burden, we are eager for innovative thinking and approaches. I should like to thank all Member States and international partners in helping to increase action to address the leading cause of death in the world.

Tackling NCDs constitutes one of the major challenges for sustainable development in the twenty-first century. I look forward to working with you towards the next milestone.

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