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Affordable funding increase can save three million lives per year from cancer in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) by 2030

New data projects that US\$18 billion increase in funding per year by the international community could result in a 30% reduction in cancer deaths in LMICs by 2030

Wednesday 4 February 2015 – World Cancer Day: Geneva, Switzerland – On World Cancer Day 2015, leading global public health experts from the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) announce that millions of lives can be saved through affordable increases in the investment into cancer services throughout the world. Crucially:

- Increased annual international community funding of US\$18 billion globally could save three million lives per year by 2030 and many more in succeeding decades, through prevention, earlier detection and improved care for cancer patients
- Increased funding will also provide pain relief to ease the deaths of millions who will die of cancer during this period
- A tripling of tobacco taxes alone would raise a tax revenue available to governments to US\$400 billion annually and could encourage one-third of smokers to quit, according to today's new figures.

“More than eight million people a year die from cancer of which more than 60% of those deaths occurred in low- and middle-income countries, the majority in the middle-income segment”, says Professor Tezer Kutluk, President of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). “The absolute number of cancer cases in developing countries is set to rise dramatically because of population growth and ageing, so action must be taken now. Whilst the US\$18 billion package is affordable for many countries, it’s unrealistic to expect the world’s poorest nations to contribute to this investment without international support,” stresses Prof. Kutluk.

Headline data presented at the World Cancer Congress¹ in December from *DCP3, Cancer* (Volume 3 of the third DCP edition²) calls on middle-income countries with the means to do so to increase spending on cancer by 2-5% of their health budgets. Low-income countries – where services are least developed, facilities largely absent and trained cancer experts few – will need support from the international community to build capacity, a process that is likely to take a decade or more.

The World Health Organization recommended “best buys” for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in 2011, including these cancer prevention interventions:

- Tobacco taxation, regulation and control to reduce tobacco-related cancers
- Hepatitis B (HBV) vaccination to prevent liver cancer
- Screening and treatment for precancerous cervical lesions

DCP3 Cancer adds basic treatment and pain control interventions to this list, which together create an “essential package:”

- HPV vaccination for adolescent girls to prevent cervical cancer
- Pain control for advanced cancer
- Treatment of selected paediatric cancers
- Diagnosing and treating early-stage breast and colon cancers

These measures address high-burden cancers (cervical, breast and colon cancers), highly-curable cancers, (selected) paediatric cancers. All interventions are cost-effective, affordable in most middle-income countries (and attainable in low-income countries, with international assistance) and feasible within the 2030 timeframe.

“It is not beyond us to prevent premature deaths from cancer, so we simply cannot sit back and continue to let the global burden grow. On World Cancer Day 2015 we demand that the international community unites to invest in improved cancer control interventions, particularly in low- and middle-income countries,” urges Cary Adams, Chief Executive Officer, Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). “Feasible and affordable solutions exist across the entire spectrum of cancer such as increased tobacco control, earlier detection and treatment, plus access to life-saving vaccination programmes, which if implemented, will help to significantly reduce disease-based poverty and prevent millions of preventable deaths.”

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¹ World Cancer Congress, 3-6 December 2014: <http://www.worldcancercongress.org/sessions/DCP-reducing-premature-deaths-cancer>

² DCP3: Disease Control Priorities, Third Edition, Volume 6 Cancer. Chapter 1: Summary and Recommendations
<http://www.dcp-3.org/volume/cancer/chapter/1/overview-and-burden>



About World Cancer Day and the theme for 2015

World Cancer Day takes place every year on 4 February and is the single initiative under which the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), its members, partners and the entire world can unite together in the fight against the global cancer epidemic.

Under the tagline 'Not beyond us', World Cancer Day 2015 will take a positive and proactive approach to the fight against cancer, highlighting that solutions do exist across the continuum of cancer, and that they are within our reach. The campaign explores how we can implement what we already know in the areas of prevention, early detection, treatment and care, and in turn, open up to the exciting prospect that we can impact the global cancer burden – for the better.

World Cancer Day 2015 will be articulated around four key areas of focus:

- Choosing healthy lives
- Delivering early detection
- Achieving treatment for all
- Maximising quality of life

For more information on how to get involved, please visit: www.worldcancerday.org.

About the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

UICC unites the cancer community to reduce the global cancer burden, to promote greater equity, and to integrate cancer control into the world health and development agenda. UICC is the largest cancer-fighting organisation of its kind, with over 800 member organisations across 155 countries representing the world's major cancer societies, ministries of health, research institutes, treatment centres and patient groups.

UICC is dedicated to continuing to work with world leaders to increase their support for cancer control measures, and encourage accountability for the cancer commitments made in the UN Political Declaration on NCDs. UICC uses key convening opportunities like the World Cancer Leaders' Summit, World Cancer Congress and World Cancer Day for continued focus on:

- Developing specific time-bound targets and indicators to measure the national implementation of policies and approaches to prevent and control cancer
- Raising the priority accorded to cancer in the global health and development agenda
- Promoting a global response to cancer

UICC and its multisectoral partners are committed to encouraging governments to look towards the implementation and scale-up of quality and sustainable programmes that address the global burden of cancer and other NCDs. UICC is also a founding member of the NCD Alliance, a global civil society network that now represents almost 2,000 organisations in 170 countries.

For more information, please visit: www.uicc.org

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