



AUSTRALIAN NCDs AND DEVELOPMENT FORUM

The Nossal Institute for Global Health, Melbourne, Australia
April 13, 2011

Meeting Report

On April 13 2011, the Nossal Institute of Global Health hosted the ‘*Australian Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and Development Forum*’. A diverse group of participants from health and development NGOs, academic institutions, and the Australian Government attended the Forum, with a key objective being to facilitate cross-sector dialogue and collaboration on addressing NCDs as part of the global development agenda.

Discussions at the forum focused on the emerging role of the development sector in tackling NCDs; lessons learned from the global responses to HIV/AIDS and tobacco; the potential to capitalise on the UN High-Level Meeting (UN HLM) process; and the mechanisms to build a broad alliance of key players to support Australia’s contribution to the fight against NCDs.

Key points raised included:

- The focus on the four most prominent NCDs: cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and chronic respiratory disease at the UN HLM, should not alienate other noncommunicable diseases from the process, particularly mental health, for which there is significant interdependency.
- The need to identify areas of overlap and potential synergies for collaboration between the health and development sectors in addressing NCDs and their risk factors. Many opportunities exist whereby both sectors can provide support in the areas of policy, legislation, advocacy, infrastructure and community outreach.
- The need for a multi-sectoral approach to NCDs that includes stakeholders from outside of the health sector (e.g. trade, agriculture, finance, education) including non-government organisations.
- The importance of developing and implementing multi-sectoral public policy that will facilitate prevention strategies that address the major risk factors associated with NCDs, e.g., policies addressing trade and taxation in food, alcohol and tobacco.
- The importance of health system strengthening and the need for creating innovative financing solutions for advancement.
- The need for increased investment in the implementation of evidence-based prevention strategies, e.g., implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.
- The value of Australia’s contribution to the NCD debate in facilitating policy dialogues; supporting a robust analytical base for policy changes and interventions; and providing technical expertise and knowledge transfer.

- The challenges facing delivery of ODA for NCDs in countries that are evolving as large economies while still facing significant health inequalities at the country level.
- The importance of recognising and addressing the social determinants of health that contribute to the burden of NCDs.
- The need for a strategic approach to advocate to all sectors of government of the importance of addressing the global burden of NCDs.
- The vital role of public engagement and debate in raising NCDs on the global health and development agenda, and the need for effective communication to fully utilise the citizen voice in advocating to government for changes to policy and service delivery.
- The importance of raising community awareness to promote changes to attitudes to NCDs, and eventually behaviours, to positively impact health outcomes.

The need for further opportunities for the development and health sectors to come together to exchange ideas and foster collaboration was noted.

A significant short-term outcome is facilitating cross-sector communication and better utilising the process of the UN HLM. However, there is a critical need to look beyond September to the next 10 to 15 years. There is an opportunity to build a comprehensive vision for how a diverse range of stakeholders including the health and development sectors will work together to identify and address the gaps in information; to articulate and advocate effectively for NCDs as a development issue; and to develop and implement public policy changes at a multi-sectoral level that promote prevention of NCDs and decrease the future dependence on clinical services.

The participants agreed that a summary of this meeting should be communicated to the WHO, and to other health, development and government representatives in the lead up to the global ministerial conference on Healthy Lifestyles and NCD control on 28-29 April in Moscow, and the UN HLM on 19-20 September in New York.