

The NCD Alliance

Putting non-communicable diseases
on the global agenda

Embargo:

28 April 2011, 00.01 GMT

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NCDs are a World Development Challenge, Says Leading Global Health Organization

Moscow – The NCD Alliance today urged government officials at the First Global Ministerial Conference on Healthy Lifestyles and Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Control in Moscow to make NCDs a central part of the global development agenda. The Conference begins today.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and chronic respiratory disease account for over 60% of all global deaths, or 36 million deaths per year. While global health responses and resources to date have focused largely on infectious diseases, the annual toll of 28 million NCD-related deaths in low- and middle-income countries is almost double that of communicable diseases, nutrition and maternal and perinatal conditions combined.

“NCDs top the list of global killers, but until now they have lingered near the bottom of health and development priorities,” said Ann Keeling, CEO of the International Diabetes Federation and Chair of the Geneva-based NCD Alliance. “The declaration that emerges from the Moscow meeting, and the actions that governments commit to at the UN Summit on NCDs in September, can change that. We believe the world is ready to pursue a comprehensive, low-cost, high-impact plan to reduce NCD risk and save millions of lives.”

The NCD Alliance is the leading civil society voice behind the organization of the UN Summit on NCDs, which will be held in New York 19-20 September, 2011. The NCD Summit, which will be attended by Heads of State and Government from around the world, presents a unique opportunity to ensure that NCDs assume a central position on the long-term global development agenda; generate high-level and sustained political commitments for a coordinated global response to NCDs; and provide the resources that can save millions from premature death and debilitating health complications.

Once viewed as “wealthy world diseases,” NCDs now disproportionately affect low- and middle-income countries and poor individuals, who are less likely to access primary health services and are more likely to be exposed to unhealthy diets, polluted environments, tobacco and other contributing factors. Four-fifths of NCD-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, where NCD death rates are nearly twice those of high-income countries. Along with illness and premature death, NCDs also create or deepen poverty and diminish a family's ability to provide for and educate children.

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The NCD Alliance believes that focusing on prevention alone cannot address the growing problem of NCDs. “We are committed to taking a comprehensive approach to the NCD challenge,” says Téa Collins, Executive Director of the NCD Alliance. “This means strengthening health systems, especially at the primary health care level, ensuring universal access to essential medicines, and giving equal emphasis to prevention and treatment. We urge governments as well as developmental agencies to mobilize their financial, human and technical resources to address the problem.”

The NCD Alliance has issued a proposed Outcomes Document for the UN Summit, which outlines a comprehensive, low-cost plan of action to reduce NCD deaths by 2% per year, thereby saving 36 million lives over the next decade. Together with leading global scientists collaborating in *The Lancet* NCD Action Group, the Alliance has identified five immediate interventions to tackle the growing global crisis - tobacco control, salt reduction, improving diets and physical activity, reducing harmful alcohol intake, and increasing access to essential medicines and technologies. Implementation of this package of interventions, chosen for their health effects, cost-effectiveness, low implementation costs and political and financial feasibility, is estimated to cost just US\$ 9 billion per year.

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Editor’s Notes

About the NCD Alliance

The NCD Alliance leads the global civil society movement against premature death and preventable illness and disability from NCDs, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes. The NCD Alliance builds coalitions, develops consensus, produces evidence and advocates for solutions to the NCD crisis. Founding partners of the NCD Alliance include the International Diabetes Federation, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, the Union for International Cancer Control and the World Heart Federation. Together, these federations represent some 900 member associations in over 170 countries and territories worldwide.

The NCD Alliance Web site is at www.ncdalliance.org.

The Alliance’s Proposed Outcomes Document for the UN Summit can be found at (http://www.ncdalliance.org/sites/default/files/resource_files/NCD%20Alliance%20Proposed%20Outcomes%20Document%20for%20the%20UN%20High-Level%20Summit.pdf).

The paper of the NCD Alliance and *The Lancet* NCD Action Group can be found at (<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2811%2960393-0/fulltext>).