



## **Alzheimer's Disease International**

*The global voice on dementia*

Statement of Annette Dumas, Alzheimer Europe, on Behalf of Alzheimer's Disease International

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I am Annette Dumas of Alzheimer Europe, speaking on behalf of Alzheimer's Disease International, the federation of national Alzheimer's Associations around the world. Globally, it is estimated that 44 million people live with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia today—and the highest growth is expected in lower and middle income countries.

We are more hopeful today of some level of coordinated action on dementia due to the leadership of the UK government, who convened a G-8 summit on dementia last December. The subsequent appointment of a global dementia envoy and council are activating several streams of work which are open to participation to *any country, not just G-7 members*. Among these are consideration of closer scientific cooperation, raising awareness and improving access to diagnosis and support, improving care and a look at the regulatory framework with an eye toward improving the pace for clinical trials.

While this is hopeful, it is vital that the formal international health bodies jump into this unique opportunity. They alone have the knowledge and networks to work dementia into health systems frameworks and ongoing work on NCD's and neurological disease activities. *In order to align the efforts between ad-hoc G-7 efforts and the existing health bodies, we suggest that Member States table a resolution on dementia at an upcoming meeting of WHO-Europe or at the World Health Assembly Executive in January 2015*

At present, Alzheimer's and related dementia are not always considered public health issues—despite publications such as the 2012 WHO report *Dementia: A Global Public Health Priority*. We think a simple first step would be for regional and national public health authorities to include information on dementia on the health topics sections of their websites that would aid professionals and the general public with timely, accurate information. MHgap tools on dementia in many languages are a great starting point for content.

Since the UN Political Declaration on NCD's recognized that “mental and neurological disorders, including Alzheimer's, are part of the NCDs” that threaten global health and development today we think there is opportunity for public health authorities to take advantage of scientific knowledge *concerning modifiable risk factors in dementia which has grown but is little used*.

An example of this is the new WHO document Tobacco Use and Dementia, the first in a series of *Tobacco Use Knowledge Summaries*. This was prepared with the objective to summarize the current evidence on this topic and is also intended as an advocacy tool to include other health care professionals in the fight for tobacco control and prevention of tobacco related diseases.

Another example is the brand new ADI 2014 report on modifiable risk and dementia that cites physical activity and diet as key to brain health.

Action plans on NCDs often leave off dementia. It is unfinished business and a missed opportunity. We stand ready to partner with the regional office or individual Member States to find ways to use this new information in health promotion and NCD activities.

At the national level we encourage Member States in developing national dementia plans. Just this month Cuba, Costa Rica and Mexico will be presenting plans.