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## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **LEADING NGOs APPLAUD DECISION TO TACKLE NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

*– UN Noncommunicable Disease Summit to focus on long-term killer diseases that threaten economic development in low- and middle-income countries –*

**Geneva, 13 May 2010** – For the first time ever, the United Nations General Assembly will hold a Noncommunicable Disease (NCD) Summit involving Heads of State, in September 2011, to address the threat posed by NCDs to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The UN General Assembly [unanimous] decision was congratulated by the World Heart Federation, International Diabetes Federation (IDF), International Union Against Cancer (UICC) and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union). This alliance of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) represents the four diseases – cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases – that are responsible for 35 million annual deaths globally, 80% of which occur in LMICs. The alliance has been at the forefront of advocacy efforts to ensure the rising burden of NCDs was addressed in the global health and development agendas.

The World Heart Federation, IDF, UICC and The Union together represent 882 member associations in more than 170 countries. By mobilizing their member networks and working with the World Health Organization's (WHO) NCDnet as well as other key organizations such as the Global Alliance on Respiratory Diseases and the Framework Convention Alliance they are one step closer to ensuring NCDs get the urgent attention they deserve, including a greater national focus, an integrated health-systems approach and allocation of essential funding. This will result in millions of lives being saved and a reversal in damaging social and economic effects.

The UN NCD Summit involving Heads of State [to be held in September 2011], will bring together government representatives from both overseas aid donor countries and LMICs with public health experts from around the world. They will discuss solutions to the growing danger posed by NCDs, and agree what action needs to be taken. The NCD alliance will support WHO in catalysing this process. There have only been 28 such summits in UN history which highlights the significance of the decision and the magnitude of the problem. The NCD alliance requests that member states invest the necessary resources to guarantee successful implementation.

“We know how to save lives, and tackle the damaging social and economic impact of noncommunicable diseases. This NCD Summit is urgently needed to agree on concrete global actions to address these diseases and their repercussions,” said Professor Pekka Puska, President of the World Heart Federation.

The WHO estimates that global deaths from NCDs will continue to rise over the next



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10 years, with the African region expected to see the highest relative increase (27%). An increasing body of evidence shows that the impact of NCDs on individuals, communities, and countries is undermining the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The omission of NCD indicators from the MDGs has been a critical barrier to securing donor funding for NCDs, which cause 14 million premature deaths every year in LMICs.

“Building on the foundation laid by the 2006 UN resolution on diabetes, we welcome the UN decision to hold a NCD Summit and support a wide consultation of the NCD community to ensure that the meeting produces concrete outcomes. We also need further research so that we can estimate the costs and cost-effectiveness of national interventions that are required to address NCDs,” said Professor Jean Claude Mbanya, President of the IDF. “It is critical to ensure that NCD interventions are integrated into national health systems.”

“Now that the UN has decided to focus on the actions that need to be taken at country level, it is time for all those involved in tackling noncommunicable diseases to act,” said Professor David Hill, President of the UICC. “Together, we know what needs to be done. With the right resources and political support, we will soon see rapid progress.”

“By working together, our organizations have shown how effective integrated action, rather than a silo approach, can be to achieving common goals”, said Dr S. Bertel Squire, President of The Union. “We are now one step closer to dealing with a global health emergency that disproportionately affects the poor and to preventing millions of unnecessary deaths each year.”

**ENDS**

#### **Notes to Editor**

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#### **About the World Heart Federation**

The World Heart Federation is dedicated to leading the global fight against heart disease and stroke with a focus on low- and middle-income countries via a united community of more than 200 member organizations. With its members, the World Heart Federation works to build global commitment to addressing cardiovascular health at the policy level, generates and exchanges ideas, shares best practice, advances scientific knowledge and promotes knowledge transfer to tackle cardiovascular disease – the world's number one killer. It is a growing membership organization that brings together the strength of medical societies and heart foundations from more than 100 countries. Through our collective efforts we can help people all over the world to lead longer and better heart-healthy lives. For more information, please visit [www.worldheart.org](http://www.worldheart.org)

#### **About the International Diabetes Federation**

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) is an umbrella organization of over 200 member associations in more than 160 countries, representing over 285 million people with diabetes, their families, and their healthcare providers. The mission of IDF is to promote diabetes care, prevention and a cure worldwide. For more information, please visit [www.idf.org](http://www.idf.org)

#### **About the International Union Against Cancer**

The International Union Against Cancer (UICC) unites 360 member organizations in over 100 countries in the global fight against cancer. It is the leading international non-governmental organization dedicated exclusively to the global control of cancer. UICC is working towards a vision of a dynamic global community of connected cancer control organizations, professionals and volunteers working together to eliminate cancer as a major life-threatening disease for future generations. For more information, please visit [www.uicc.org](http://www.uicc.org)

#### **About the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)**

The mission of the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) is to bring innovation, expertise, solutions and support to address health challenges in low- and middle-income populations. Founded in 1920, The Union today is both a non-profit institute with five scientific departments and 14 offices worldwide and a federation of close to 3,000 organisations and individuals who are committed to the same goals. Its scientific departments focus on tuberculosis, HIV, lung health and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control and research; and each engages in research, provides technical assistance and offers training and other capacity-building activities leading to health solutions for the poor. To learn more about The Union, please visit [www.theunion.org](http://www.theunion.org)