***Under embargo until 27 September 2018***

**Nearly one in five deaths from cardiovascular disease are caused by air pollution ...**

**... a total of 3 million deaths globally every year**

* *On World Heart Day, 29 September 2018, World Heart Federation (WHF) is raising awareness of the strong link between poor air quality and cardiovascular disease (CVD), including heart disease and stroke*
* *Outdoor and household air pollution are an increasingly important risk factor for CVD: according to recent research, air pollution is the cause of* ***19% of all CVD deaths****, accounting for more than 3 million deaths each year1*
* *7 million people die prematurely every year from air pollution: 1.4 million from stroke and over 2 million from heart disease2*
* *CVD is the world's biggest killer, causing over* ***17.5 million deaths each year****3. WHD is the biggest awareness-raising campaign for CVD, bringing together every country in the world to improve heart health through educational and awareness activities*

**Air pollution and cardiovascular disease (CVD)**

This year, on 29 September, the World Heart Federation (WHF) is raising awareness of an increasingly important CVD risk factor: air pollution. **Nineteen percent** of all CVD deaths are caused by outdoor and household air pollution1, the equivalent of more than 3 million deaths every year.

The latest scientific evidence by [Nature](https://www.nature.com/articles/nrcardio.2017.207)4 warns that exposure to nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter air pollution, originating from household wood, coal burning, industrial facilities, vehicle emissions and agricultural burning, is clearly linked to CVD mortality. In addition, exposure to these particles increases the risk of developing hypertension and type 2 diabetes, which are major risk factors for CVD.

Poor air quality is also ranked as the 4th cause of Disability-Adjusted Life Year (DALY) - one lost year of 'healthy life' - above tobacco, according to latest Global Burden of Disease study5.

**Professor David Wood, WHF President, comments**: *“Reducing exposure to air pollution has become a crucial challenge that the world needs to face if we are to continue advancing in our goal to reduce the impact of noncommunicable diseases, especially cardiovascular disease - the world's biggest killer. On World Heart Day, we are raising awareness of poor outdoor and household air quality as an increasingly important risk factor, and bringing together all those involved in cardiovascular health from every country in the world in the fight to reduce CVD."*

**My Heart, Your Heart**

Created and led by the World Heart Federation (WHF), World Heart Day aims to combat the rising number of people with cardiovascular disease (CVD), including heart disease and stroke, by promoting the importance of living a heart-healthy lifestyle. The 2018 campaign, in partnership with Manulife and Philips, is all about saying to ourselves, the people we care for and individuals all around the world, “what can I do right now to look after MY HEART... and YOUR HEART?”

On 29 September, people all around the world will unite to fight CVD by holding awareness activities and events, spreading the word on social media, sharing the campaign video, organizing fundraising activities for their local heart foundation and illuminating iconic landmarks, buildings or monuments.

This year the campaign includes a clear and simple call to action: **Make your heart promise**. A promise as an individual to cook and eat more healthily, to do more exercise and encourage your children to be more active, to say no to smoking and help your loved ones to stop. A promise as a healthcare professional to continue working to reduce the impact of CVD and save more lives. A promise as a politician to implement a noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) action plan. A simple promise ... for MY HEART, for YOUR HEART, for ALL OUR HEARTS. To make your promise to support heart health this World Heart Day, visit [http://www.worldheart.org](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com_-3Furl-3Dhttp-253A-252F-252Fwww.worldheart.org-26data-3D02-257C01-257C-257C78d1ea5af467463369da08d614a8b9eb-257C1a407a2d76754d178692b3ac285306e4-257C0-257C0-257C636719113328586713-26sdata-3DfJKNS9JfLulkoCn1XgoDmbM2MaSIHdph2eR7xYSLvQI-253D-26reserved-3D0&d=DwMGaQ&c=9wxE0DgWbPxd1HCzjwN8Eaww1--ViDajIU4RXCxgSXE&r=JOr9fCyNgg0OzfTzkOSO8foYXk4-WvBSWfxLKeIX5JI&m=3IouSwFVe4j0m3BUGfzAZpSHrRd5T5cfcATaXJt801M&s=mYqjbMDgf27QXSE8NAS-BaODt6gv5xxbnyxdKmukhp8&e=) and share your promise on social media using #WorldHeartDay and tagging [www.facebook.com/worldheartfederation](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com_-3Furl-3Dhttp-253A-252F-252Fwww.facebook.com-252Fworldheartfederation-26data-3D02-257C01-257C-257C78d1ea5af467463369da08d614a8b9eb-257C1a407a2d76754d178692b3ac285306e4-257C0-257C0-257C636719113328596721-26sdata-3DRKSzJRxPpEZ0v31ItawE-252BqerQA6y8qeqbm8NKz7AuLI-253D-26reserved-3D0&d=DwMGaQ&c=9wxE0DgWbPxd1HCzjwN8Eaww1--ViDajIU4RXCxgSXE&r=JOr9fCyNgg0OzfTzkOSO8foYXk4-WvBSWfxLKeIX5JI&m=3IouSwFVe4j0m3BUGfzAZpSHrRd5T5cfcATaXJt801M&s=DHl7nhL_BXEYh4QKEt5kaxN94HvFyn60M38A5J8qywk&e=).

"Eighty percent of the premature deaths [aged 30 to 70]6 caused by CVD are preventable if risk factors are effectively controlled and so on World Heart Day the World Heart Federation (WHF) encourages everyone to make a heart promise. Our ambition is to urge everyone to improve their own cardiovascular health, and to help to improve the cardiovascular health of others," comments **David Wood**. "In turn, we at WHF will be making our own heart promise: to collaborate with the World Health Organization and other parties to raise public awareness of the impact of air pollution on health in general ... and heart health in particular."

“This year’s campaign is all about encouraging individuals to commit to healthier habits by making heart promises, which goes hand-in-hand with Manulife’s goal of helping make people’s decisions easier and lives better,” said **Mary Desjardins-Therrien, Assistant Vice President, Corporate Citizenship & Sponsorship at Manulife**. “We’re excited to support World Heart Day on September 29 and encourage individuals and organizations to join us in adopting initiatives to promote heart health – from eating better to getting more active or going for regular check-ups, small changes can make a big difference.”

**Roy Jakobs, Business Leader, Philips Personal Health** comments: “It is well understood that avoiding known risk factors such as anunhealthy diet, physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol and tobacco is key to maintaining a healthy heart.  What’s less well known outside of the scientific and medical communities is that clean air is also essential to heart health. That’s why we applaud WHF’s focus this World Heart Day on creating wider awareness of poor air quality as an increasingly important CVD risk factor.”

“Globally, according to the WHO, 91% of the world’s population live in areas where air pollution exceeds the WHO guidelines limits7. At Philips, we believe that every breath matters and we strive to create solutions to enable people around the world to breathe cleaner air, especially sensitive groups like elderly, pregnant woman and people suffering from (respiratory) diseases.”

REFERENCES:

1Source: GBD 2016 Risk Factors Collaborators. Global, regional, and national comparative risk assessment of 84 behavioural, environmental and occupational, and metabolic risks or clusters of risks, 1990–2016: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2016. *Lancet* **390**, 1345–1422 (2017).

2Source: WHO

3Source :WHO

4Source: Nature Reviews Cardiology volume 15, pages 193–194 (2018).

5<https://vizhub.healthdata.org>

6Source: WHO

7Source: <http://www.who.int/airpollution/en/>

**Ends**

**For any further information, including stats and facts or to arrange an interview or briefing please contact the WHF press office on cla@homeatc.com**

The World Heart Day video can be viewed [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVLF_RyE4iA&feature=youtu.be)

**The iconic venues turning red for World Heart Day include:**

* Great Pyramid of Giza, Egypt
* Niagara Falls, USA
* Jet d'Eau, Switzerland
* Tower of Hercules, Spain
* Bucharest Skytower, Romania
* Adelaide Oval, Australia
* Los Angeles Airport, USA
* El Ángel de La Independencia, Mexico
* Emirates Spinnaker Tower, UK
* Usain Bolt Statue, Jamaica

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**Notes to editors**

**About World Heart Day 2018**

World Heart Day was founded in 2000 to inform people around the globe that heart disease and stroke are the world’s leading causes of death, claiming more than 17.5 million lives each year. World Heart Day takes place on 29 September every year. For more information about World Heart Day including access to the campaign resources [visit the website](https://www.world-heart-federation.org/world-heart-day/).

**About the World Heart Federation**

The World Heart Federation is dedicated to leading the global fight against cardiovascular disease (CVD), including heart disease and stroke. We are the only global advocacy and leadership organization bringing together the entire CVD community to drive the CVD agenda and help people live longer, better, more heart-healthy lives. We and our members - more than 200 organizations, scientific societies, foundations and patient associations in over 100 countries - believe in a world where heart health for everyone is a fundamental human right and a crucial element of global health justice. Because every heartbeat matters.

For more information, please visit: www.worldheart.org; www.facebook.com/worldheartfederation and twitter.com/worldheartfed.