

A global coalition for the fight against heart disease and stroke

As political leaders prepare for the third UN High-level Meeting on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in 2018, the World Heart Federation (WHF) is bringing together a global coalition of international, regional, and national stakeholders in cardiovascular diseases (CVD) to drive the urgent action needed to combat heart disease and stroke.

CVDs are the leading cause of mortality worldwide, with more than 75% of these deaths occurring in low-income and middle-income countries.¹ Yet the huge burden of heart attacks and strokes is not being addressed with the priority required to achieve the 25% reduction in premature mortality from NCDs by 2025 (25 by 25),² an ambition only achievable through a substantial reduction in heart attacks and stroke. Nor are the implementation of the WHO Global Action Plan³ and national action plans on NCDs being driven by politicians and policy makers with sufficient vigour.

Given this slow progress, WHF convened the 1st Global Summit for Circulatory Health in June, 2016, that resulted in the Mexico Declaration.⁴ Adopted by 29 global, regional, and national civil society organisations, the signatories pledged to advocate for policies for cardiovascular health, develop a common implementation strategy based on evidence, and develop a common language for policy makers. Since then, we have seen the launch of Resolve,⁵ an initiative to prevent an additional 100 million deaths from CVD globally, led by Tom Frieden, and the Global Hearts Initiative,⁶ led by WHO in partnership with WHF, the World Stroke Organization, and the International Society of Hypertension, among others. The success of these initiatives will depend on political will and investment.

Inspiring a greater sense of urgency was the theme of WHF's 2nd Global Summit in Singapore in July, 2017, that was attended by the leaders of 88 organisations. In his opening address at the summit, Michael Bloomberg, the WHO Global Ambassador for NCDs, called for "bold action" to achieve 25 by 25. Richard Horton, the Editor-in-Chief of *The Lancet*, posed the question "Why are we failing to prevent the preventable given that we know the causes?", and Salim Yusuf challenged organisations to act now to translate scientific evidence into policy and action. The plenary and workshop discussions included topics on national CVD action plans, the WHO Global Hearts Initiative,⁶ and WHF Roadmaps to 25 by 25,⁷ access

to essential and affordable medicines and technologies, moving towards healthier cities, political advocacy, and building a civil society movement.

The need to coordinate international advocacy efforts became self-evident during discussions at the summit and a decision was made to form a global coalition of international, regional, and national stakeholders to work together for circulatory health. This Global Coalition for Circulatory Health is open to any professional organisation with a role in circulatory health. The Coalition will leverage the expertise and reach of its international partners to advocate for increased prevention, control, and treatment of all circulatory diseases (panel).

As leaders in global health gather in Montevideo, Uruguay, on Oct 18–20, 2017, for the WHO Global Conference on Noncommunicable Diseases,⁸ we should remember that all organisations dedicated to tackling heart disease and stroke have their part to play. We can ensure our collective voice is heard more clearly by politicians and policy makers and, working together, accelerate the fight against heart disease and stroke.

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Panel: Objectives of Global Coalition for Circulatory Health

- Achieve the global target of a 25% reduction by 2025 in premature mortality from heart disease and stroke, as an essential component to the 25 by 25 NCD target and a key milestone to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 3.4 of a one-third reduction in premature NCD deaths by 2030.
- Unite the diverse voices of the circulatory health community to become more powerful advocates to policy makers and politicians.
- Align all organisations to support the WHO Global Hearts Initiative⁶ to improve the prevention, control, and treatment of heart disease and stroke through primary health care.
- Promote common international messaging by partnering organisations and leveraging their extensive networks to cascade messages to regional and national levels.
- Strengthen the voice of people living with heart disease and stroke by including patients, their families, and communities in decision-making processes and in national, regional, and global advocacy.
- Convene an annual Global Summit on Circulatory Health for professional leaders from the public and private sectors to drive the international, regional, and national agendas for circulatory health.

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DW is President and J-LE is Chief Executive Officer of the World Heart Federation. We declare no other competing interests.

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- 7 World Heart Federation. Global CVD Roadmaps. 2016. <http://www.cvdroadmaps.org/> (accessed Sept 7, 2017).
- 8 WHO. WHO Global Conference on Noncommunicable Diseases: enhancing policy coherence between different spheres of policy making that have a bearing on attaining SDG target 3.4 on NCDs by 2030. 2017. <http://www.who.int/nmh/events/2017/montevideo/about/en/> (accessed Sept 7, 2017).