



# The NCD Alliance

Putting non-communicable diseases  
on the global agenda

[www.ncdalliance.org](http://www.ncdalliance.org)

## Campaign Update

November 2010

for FCTC Conference of the Parties

**"Tobacco use is unlike other threats to global health. Infectious diseases do not employ multinational public relations firms. There are no front groups to promote the spread of cholera. Mosquitoes have no lobbyists."**

WHO Zeltner Report, 2000

### UN CALLS HISTORIC SUMMIT ON NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

On May 13th 2010, the UN General Assembly voted in favour of a UN Resolution, tabled by Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states, calling for a global summit to address the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) to be held in September 2011.

Over 130 countries, including Brazil, Canada, China, India, Russia, the UK and the USA co-sponsored the resolution. The unanimous vote shows that NCDs and their risk factors, including tobacco use, have become a global priority for world leaders and a key development issue. The NCD Alliance (IDF, UICC, The Union and WHF) has worked closely with the Framework Convention Alliance and other partners including the American Cancer Society and Livestrong to lead the civil society movement which led to passage of the resolution.

The resolution calls on Member States and the international community to convene a High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly in September 2011, with the participation of Heads of State and Government, on the prevention and control of NCDs (The NCD Summit)

#### NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

NCDs include cancers, cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes. The four leading risk factors for those diseases are tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol. Tobacco use is the only risk factor for all four major NCDs.

NCDs are responsible for more than 35 million deaths each year worldwide, with 80% in low- and middle-income countries. WHO projects that, globally, NCD deaths will increase by 17% over the next ten years. The greatest increase will be in the African region (27%) and the Eastern Mediterranean region (25%). The highest absolute number of deaths will occur in the Western Pacific and South-East Asia regions. In 2008, cancer alone accounted for 7.6 million deaths globally, more than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined.

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CONVENTION?

Parties to the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) have repeatedly recognised that financial assistance for Treaty implementation at the national level is crucial for the long-term success of the Convention. Tobacco control is a recognised pillar of NCD prevention strategies. In order to secure long-term, sustainable funding for tobacco control initiatives, as a component of NCD prevention programmes, efforts to tackle the tobacco epidemic must be supported by the development community. The NCD Summit is an excellent opportunity to put tobacco control at the forefront of the global health agenda and to ensure that FCTC implementation is a key aim of the development community.

## WHAT DO WE WANT?



The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) currently do not contain any text addressing the issue of NCDs – or of preventable risk factors including tobacco use – and the impact of the NCD epidemic on the achievement of the MDGs.

However, a report from the UN Non-Governmental Liaison

Service summarising progress towards achieving the MDGs states that NCDs “severely limit the resources of health systems and as such have an impact on the implementation of MDGs 4, 5, and 6 as well as on poverty in general (MDG 1)”.

The report also states that: “if the mission of the MDGs is to reduce rather than sustain poverty in low- to middle-income countries, programmes designed to achieve health MDGs must address all the major diseases that can trap households in vicious cycles of illness and destitution, not just HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, but also NCDs such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes or respiratory diseases”.

In this context, COP-4 should re-emphasise the link between tobacco use and poverty, as well as the role of tobacco control for poverty alleviation efforts, and reaffirm the role of tobacco control initiatives as a key prevention strategy in the fight against NCDs.

The NCD Alliance believes that NCDs and their risk factors, including tobacco control, should be explicitly included in the successor goals to the MDGs, due to be introduced in 2015. This would mean that implementation of the FCTC, and necessary funding to achieve this, would become a key part of the global development agenda.

## THE NCD ALLIANCE CALLS ON THE PARTIES AT COP-4:

- To call on Heads of State to attend the Summit, and to support the inclusion in the Summit’s Final Outcome Document of the full implementation of FCTC measures as a priority issue for international development
- To adopt a decision at COP 4 recognising: the threat posed by NCDs to the MDGs; the importance of tobacco control in preventing NCDs; and therefore the importance of tobacco control in fighting poverty and assisting development
- To request the Secretariat to provide any required support for the preparation of the NCD Summit; and to present a report on the Summit’s outcomes at COP-5.

## UN NGO CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS NCDs

The final Declaration of the annual United Nations conference for NGOs recognises NCDs as one of the significant health challenges facing the MDGs. The Declaration from the Conference in Melbourne, Australia, in September 2010, agreed by 1,600 participants representing over 350 NGOs from more than 70 countries, also called on governments to “respect and implement” international health agreements such as the FCTC.

The Declaration is an important recognition of the impact that NCDs have on global public health. Up to four out of every five deaths from NCDs could be prevented by tackling key risk factors, the single most important of which is tobacco use.

## ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF TOBACCO USE

- By 2010, WHO estimates the annual global cost of tobacco use to be US \$500 billion – a figure higher than the GDP of 174 of 192 UN members
- The costs of treating diseases caused and exacerbated by tobacco use can contribute up to 15% of total healthcare costs in developed countries. As much as 10% of family income in some parts of the world is spent on tobacco, limiting expenditure on food, clothing, education and shelter
- For nearly 50% of the world’s population, a pack of Marlboros costs approximately half of a family’s daily income

## UPCOMING EVENTS

128th World Health Organization Executive Board	17-25 January Geneva
World Economic Forum Annual Meeting	26-30 January Davos
5th European Conference on Tobacco or Health	28-30 March Amsterdam
Russia Ministerial Conference on NCDs and Healthy Lifestyles	28-29 April Moscow
64th World Health Assembly	16-25 May Geneva
UN High Level Meeting on NCDs	September (date tba) New York

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