



Australians for Global Action on Non-Communicable Diseases*

Media Release

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UN summit marks the beginning of global action on chronic diseases

This week's historic United Nations summit on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) must mark the beginning of concerted and sustained global action to combat the rapid rise of major chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, kidney disease and chronic respiratory disease, leading Australian chronic disease groups said today.

These major chronic diseases are placing immense social and economic burden on all nations, but especially low and middle income countries with health systems ill-equipped to cope with this escalating epidemic.

Much of this burden of disease can be prevented through cost effective interventions, such as tobacco control strategies, salt reduction and food reformulation programs and initiatives to build physical activity back into everyday lives.

The summit - to be held in New York on Monday Sep 19 and Tuesday Sep 20 – will only be the second major health summit convened by the UN, the first focusing on HIV/AIDS in 2001.

The case for coordinated global action on NCDs is compelling. NCDs cause more than 60% of all deaths across the globe at a cost to the global economy of trillions of dollars. Eighty percent of victims live in poor countries where the epidemic is growing most quickly.

Australians for Global Action on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) have met with parliamentarians and senior health and aid officials over the past 12 months to encourage strong Australian leadership to ensure robust outcomes from the UN summit and to ensure that the summit leads to sustained action in the years ahead.

Australia has proved itself a world leader in tobacco control with its ground breaking action on plain packaging of tobacco and is well placed to continue to lead global change by working to secure a strong commitment to action at the summit, such as accelerated implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Australia has also signaled its commitment to global action on NCDs with the Government's recent announcement of funding assistance for NCD control in the Pacific.

The draft outcomes document that will be considered at the summit falls short of a full and robust response to the global NCD epidemic but if adopted contains enough commitment to action to ensure that coordinated global action on NCDs can get underway in earnest.

We are particularly pleased to see a commitment to developing global targets and indicators and a monitoring framework during 2012 and some serious commitments to addressing the causes of chronic disease, many of which are preventable.

We thank the Australian Government for its commitment to the summit and look forward to working collaboratively with both government and the broader community to reduce the carnage caused by chronic disease in Australia, our region and the developing world.

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**About Australians for Global Action on NCDs*

Australians for Global Action on NCDs is a group of individuals and organisations with expertise in chronic disease prevention and treatment working to raise awareness of the global impact of NCDs and to generate local support for global action.

*Members are: **Associate Professor Ruth Colagiuri**, International Diabetes Federation; **Professor David Hill**, International Union Against Cancer; Adjunct **Professor Greg Johnson**, Diabetes Australia; Mr **Lewis Kaplan**, Diabetes Australia; **Dr Erin Lalor**, National Stroke Foundation; **Professor Rob Moodie**, Nossal Institute for Global Health; **Professor Ian Olver**, Cancer Council Australia; **Dr Lyn Roberts**, National Heart Foundation of Australia and World Heart Federation; **Ms Helen Robinson**, Nossal Institute for Global Health, **Ms Anne Wilson**, Kidney Health Australia.*

The group is supported by the Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance