



Australian Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance

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Australia must lead push for global action on chronic disease

A group of Australian health organizations attending this week's UN conference on global health in Melbourne have called on the next Federal Government to help lead the global campaign to get chronic disease on the United Nation's health agenda.

The UN's 'Millennium Development Goals' set a decade ago failed to mention chronic disease - also known as non-communicable disease or NCDs - despite clear evidence it is an international priority;

- NCDs, which include heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory disease cause 60% of all deaths globally, 80% of which are in low- and middle-income countries.

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 8 million people die prematurely in low and middle income countries from NCDs every year.

- WHO projects that global deaths from NCDs will continue to rise over the next 10 years, with the African region expected to see the highest relative increase (27%) with the largest increase in numerical terms occurring in the Asia-Pacific region.

"The chronic disease NGOs - Cancer Council, Heart Foundation, Diabetes Australia, Stroke Foundation and Kidney Health Australia - applaud the Federal Government for supporting the UN resolution in May to hold a special UN summit in September next year on chronic disease," Dr Lyn Roberts, CEO of the National Heart Foundation and Vice President of the World Heart Federation, said today.

"But we now need to see Australia commit to making sure that this summit is not a talkfest, but a meeting that drives change.

"While NCDs are a major cause of world poverty, a recent survey by the Centre for Global Development in Washington showed that scant attention is being paid to these major disease groups.

"Less than 1% of the US\$22bn spent on health by international aid agencies in low- and middle-income countries is spent on NCDs, despite NCDs forming 60% of the burden of disease in those countries," Dr Roberts said.

The NGOs struggling with the growing burden of chronic disease across the world want to see the following outcomes from next year's summit:

- Governments to be accountable and measured on NCD plans

- Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to be fully implemented
- A global commitment to prevent the preventable
- Globally agreed approaches to NCD treatment and care
- Resources to deliver global NCD interventions
- NCDs specifically included in the successor goals to the current Millennium Development Goals.

The exact details of length, scope and outcomes of the UN Summit on NCDs will be decided by a Modalities Resolution which is expected to be put to the UN General Assembly at the end of 2010.

Chronic disease groups in Australia are calling on the Australian Government to ensure the summit leads to lasting global action.

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