

His Excellency Ban Ki-moon  
Secretary-General of the United Nations  
New York, NY 10017, USA

17 August 2011

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

As Presidents of the four non-governmental organizations that founded the NCD Alliance, representing over 2,000 member associations with our partners, we are writing to express our grave concern at the current state of preparations for the High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (HLM) on 19-20 September 2011.

As your Excellency will be aware, Member State negotiations on the draft Political Declaration for the HLM stalled on 5 August and resume on 1 September. We understand that the current draft contains no overarching goal and no clear decision to establish the means through which commitments can be followed up and coordinated at a global level. It merely “requests the Secretary-General” to provide options by the end of next year for further consideration.

Excellency, your own report to the General Assembly only three months ago makes the case for immediate action: *“The knowledge and technology to fight the onset and effects of non-communicable diseases already exist. It’s time to act to save future generations from the health and socio-economic harm of such diseases.”*

The situation is urgent. The social and economic cost of inaction is extremely high. Yet, it is reported that sound proposals for the draft Declaration to include time-bound commitments and targets are being systematically deleted, diluted and downgraded. In place of the promised “action-oriented outcomes”, it seems there might be only vague intentions to “consider” and “work towards”.

This is simply unacceptable. It will do nothing to protect future generations through primary and secondary prevention or to help alleviate the pain and hardship suffered now by hundreds of millions of people around the world without access to essential technologies and life-saving medicines, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. This inaction will undoubtedly also lead to increased poverty among affected populations.

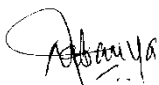
Member States must grasp the opportunity of the HLM and agree to:

- an overarching goal to reduce preventable deaths from NCDs: 25% by 2025
- a set of specific, evidence-based targets and global indicators
- a clear timeline for tackling the epidemic of the four major NCDs
- a high-level collaborative initiative of government and UN agencies with civil society to stimulate and assess progress

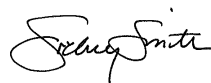
Civil society stands ready to work with governments and the UN to tackle NCDs; but civil society will not accept a failure to act now. NCD Alliance members and supporters around the world are conveying these concerns to their Heads of State and Government this week.

We urge your Excellency to use every opportunity in the coming weeks to encourage Member States to make this September the turning point in the fight to prevent and control cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular and chronic respiratory disease. Let us see serious commitments in September translated swiftly into action to save lives.

Yours sincerely,




Prof Jean-Claude Mbanya  
President  
International Diabetes Federation



Prof Sidney C Smith  
President  
World Heart Federation



Dr Eduardo Cazap  
President  
Union for International Cancer Control



Dr S B Squire  
President  
International Union Against  
Tuberculosis and Lung Disease

cc:

His Excellency Joseph Deiss, President of the General Assembly

His Excellency Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President-Elect of the General Assembly

Her Excellency Sylvie Lucas, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Luxembourg

His Excellency Raymond O. Wolfe, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Jamaica

Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization