



The NCD Alliance
Putting non-communicable diseases
on the global agenda

A side event during the Tenth Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Addressing the threat of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) among Indigenous Peoples

Monday, 23 May 2011, 1:15-2:45 pm

Conference Room 1, North Lawn Building

-Spanish and English-

Indigenous peoples enjoy equal rights to the attainment of the highest standard of physical and mental health and to incorporate the use of traditional medicines and health practices in pursuit of this. Article 24 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, also assures these individuals the right to access health and social services. Notwithstanding, there exists significant health disparities between indigenous and non indigenous populations. Non communicable diseases (NCDs)¹ pose a grave threat to the health and lives of the world's estimated 370 million indigenous peoples. Where disaggregated data is available, it reveals increasing rates of premature death from lung cancer, diabetes, heart and cardiovascular diseases and a health gap between indigenous and non-indigenous populations. In the United States of America, diabetes rates are 56.8 per thousand in indigenous peoples as compared to 13.6 in non indigenous populations; in Australia, the 2003 indigenous health gap accounted for 59% of the total burden of disease for indigenous peoples, of which 70% was attributed to non communicable diseases.²

The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples (2010) calls attention to the vulnerability of indigenous peoples to the onset of diabetes due to a combination of environmental, genetic and socio-economic factors; including, the loss of traditional food systems due to the contamination and destruction of natural habitats and the disappearance of plants and animals. Addressing these inequalities requires the application of international human rights instruments at the individual and collective levels.

The 10th session of the Permanent Forum is an opportune moment to raise awareness of the high burden of NCDs within indigenous peoples as a development priority. This panel discussion will provide a platform to consult with the world's indigenous peoples in preparation for the high level meeting on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, in September 2011. The event will take into consideration the indigenous holistic concept of health as a "harmonious coexistence of human beings with nature, with themselves, and with others, aimed at integral well-being, in spiritual, individual, and social wholeness and tranquility"³.



¹ Non Communicable Diseases(NCDs): Cancer, Cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes

² Vos T, Barker B, Begg S, Stanley L, Lopez AD. Burden of disease and injury in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: the Indigenous health gap. *Int. J. Epidemiol.* (2009) 38(2): 470-477

³ Health Workshop, Guaranda, Bolivar, Ecuador, 1995.



The NCD Alliance

Putting non-communicable diseases
on the global agenda

Objectives:

- Share the experience of a Member State in addressing the health development needs of its indigenous peoples
- Review the relative burden of NCDs and their risk factors among indigenous peoples and discuss the health disparities between indigenous and non indigenous peoples
- Highlight the need for disaggregated data by sex, age, ethnicity and other culturally relevant criteria
- Advocate for the achievement of universal access to culturally appropriate health care systems and related services
- Hear from indigenous peoples of their experience in addressing NCDs personally and at the community level

Panelists:

- H.E. Ms Pauline Sukhai, Minister of Amerindian Affairs, Republic of Guyana
- Ms. Myrna Cunningham Kain, Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- Dr. Maria Ines Barbosa, Specialist in Cultural Diversity in Health, PAHO/WHO
- Dr. Alex M. McComber, Member of the Bear Clan from Kahnawake Mohawk Territory
- Mr. Shane Kawenata Bradbrook, Teo Reo Marama Maori Smokefree Coalition (video)

Moderator:

- Dr. Karen Sealey, PAHO/WHO Special Advisor

The event is being co-sponsored by CARICOM, WHO and the NCD Alliance

For more information, please contact Ms Jinny Klimas at jklimas@whoun.org

