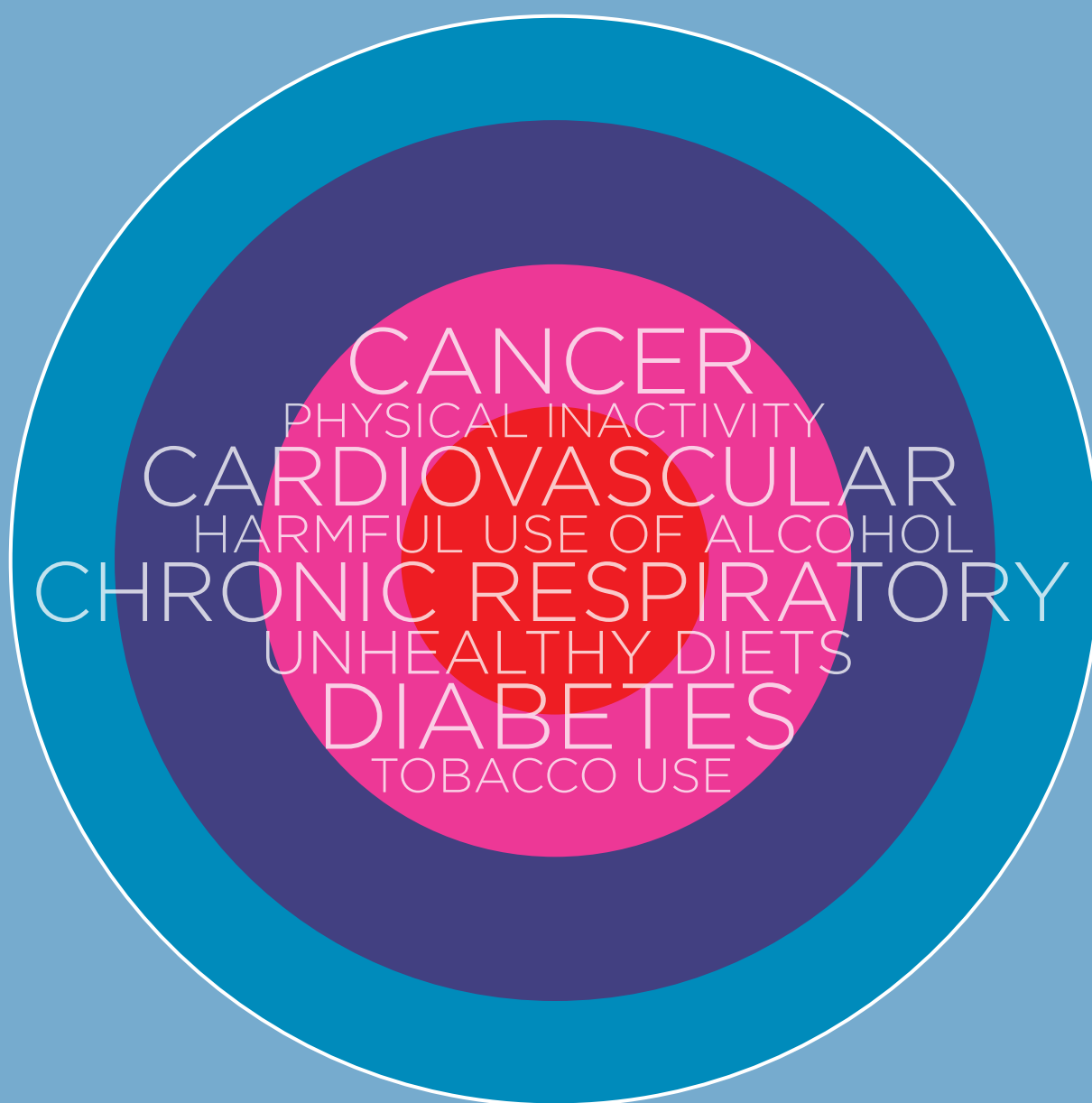


KEY MESSAGES

ON NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

UNITE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST NCDs:

PROTECT HEALTH AND PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT





1

THE UN HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IS A HISTORIC, POWERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR GLOBAL CHANGE

- The United Nations is calling all Member States to a high-level meeting on the prevention and control of Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs), to be held 19–20 September 2011 in New York City.
- This offers an unprecedented opportunity for heads of state and other world leaders to discuss the problem and help change how the world addresses NCDs, their risk factors and determinants.
- This is a rare opportunity for actors from different sectors to discuss development, economic and health aspects of NCDs for developing and developed country contexts.
- A political declaration of commitment for a multi-sector response to NCDs is expected from this high-level meeting.

2

NCDs AFFECT EVERYONE AND ARE A DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM THAT THREATENS THE MDGs

- NCDs kill more people in the Americas than any other cause of death and inflict great socioeconomic hardship, particularly in poorer populations.
- Tobacco use, especially among youths and increasingly girls, is the principal risk factor affecting the NCD epidemic in the Americas.
- The rise in the prevalence of obesity, especially among children, will lead to an increase in obesity-related diseases and in the burden of NCDs.
- Women, men and children are affected differently by NCDs because of the roles that biology, gender, ethnicity, and the environment, as well as social and economic circumstances, play in shaping health and NCDs. Health statistics should be disaggregated and analyzed to understand these differences, and prevention, intervention and care need to take into consideration these varied needs and circumstances.
- The growing burden of NCDs affects the poor and disproportionately women. Where interventions are weak or non-existent, NCDs force people into poverty through high out-of-pocket expenditures for treatment. Moreover, most of the care is unpaid and provided in the home, predominantly by women with economic consequences. This will slow or threaten attainment of the health-related MDGs.

3

NCDs REQUIRE A RESPONSE FROM ALL SECTORS, NOT JUST THE HEALTH SECTOR

- The health sector, acting alone, cannot curb the NCD epidemic. All sectors of government and society must work together.
- Action is required from sectors including education, media, agriculture, trade, transport, environment, urban planning, consumers, economics and finance.
- Governments, civil society and the private sector all play important roles in creating healthy environments and making healthy choices available to consumers. Thus they all need to be engaged in the dialogue on NCDs to identify mutually beneficial solutions to together prevent and manage chronic diseases.

4

SUCCESS AGAINST NCDs IS POSSIBLE, AND PREVENTION IS KEY

- Preventing the primary risk factors of NCDs, namely tobacco use, poor diets, harmful use of alcohol and physical inactivity, is a top priority to reverse the rising trends in NCDs.
- Prevention is not only about individual behavior change but also about establishing sustainable and systemic changes in policies, physical and social environments and health services to promote health and well-being.
- Schools, workplaces, and community settings can serve as places to create healthy environments and promote healthy behaviors, for example, by offering healthy foods and providing incentives for physical activity.
- Legislation and regulations are also needed to protect people from the risks that cause NCDs. Developing countries are soft targets and easy markets, and many need basic regulatory capacity for health-promoting policies.
- Priority NCD strategies include:

TOBACCO REDUCTION, by accelerating implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which includes taxation, restrictions on marketing and sales of tobacco products, as well as banning smoking in public places.

IMPROVE DIETS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, through policies that prevent obesity, promote healthy living and encourage consumption of more fruits and vegetables and less processed foods high in fat, salt and sugar.

SALT REDUCTION, through food product reformulation and public awareness, to improve prevention and control of hypertension.

REDUCE HARMFUL USE OF ALCOHOL, including through taxation and regulations on alcohol promotion and marketing.

IMPROVE CARE AND ESSENTIAL DRUGS AND TECHNOLOGIES, including multidrug combination and oral hypoglycemics for cardiovascular disease, insulin for diabetes, off-patent drugs for cancer treatment, and HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) vaccines for cervical cancer prevention.



5

A STRONGER HEALTH SYSTEM IS ESSENTIAL AND WILL BENEFIT ALL ASPECTS OF HEALTH CARE

- Health system strengthening is vital to provide long-term, continuous and high-quality care for persons with chronic conditions.
- Primary healthcare services can be strengthened to provide screening, early detection, and follow-up care for persons with chronic conditions, as well as counseling and community support to reduce risks and maintain health.
- Strengthening primary care for NCDs can create synergies with improved care for persons living with HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria and with child and maternal health.
- Health services need to involve and take into consideration the needs of the various populations and communities, recognizing, for example, the need for gender-sensitive care and culturally appropriate services.

6

ACTION IS URGENTLY NEEDED NOW. NCDs ARE COSTLY AND, AS THE EPIDEMIC KEEPS RISING, WILL BECOME A MAJOR ECONOMIC ISSUE FOR COUNTRIES AND FAMILIES

- NCDs drive up the costs of health care at an unsustainable rate and force people into poverty. Prevention and cost-effective treatment are keys to ensuring that health systems can support people living longer, healthier lives.
- The NCDs epidemic already stretches far beyond the coping capacities of lower-income countries. Without urgent action, the rising financial burden of these diseases will reach levels beyond the means of even wealthy countries.



THE NCD BURDEN IN THE AMERICAS

THE LEADING NCDs IN THE REGION ARE:
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE • CANCER • DIABETES • CHRONIC RESPIRATORY DISEASE

DEATHS:
3.9 MILLION PEOPLE in the Americas die annually from NCDs,
accounting for **76%** OF ALL DEATHS.



+ **than 1/3** of these deaths are premature (people under 70) **AND LARGELY PREVENTABLE.**



The overall portion of women and men dying from NCDs is equal,
yet **MANY MORE MEN DIE PREMATURELY.**



KEY DRIVERS FOR THE NCD PROBLEM IN OUR REGION ARE:
URBANIZATION • POPULATION GROWTH • CHANGES IN AGE STRUCTURE • LIFESTYLES
This has led to an epidemiologic transition in which NCDs have overtaken infectious and other diseases as leading causes of death.

RISK FACTORS:
The Americas region is characterized by some of the highest rates of obesity,
with **50-60%** OF ADULTS CONSIDERED OVERWEIGHT OR
OBESE, putting them at higher risk for NCDs.



The region is also characterized by **HIGH RATES OF SMOKING**,
ESPECIALLY IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS, among whom rates now
exceed those for boys in many countries.





NCDs AND MDGs

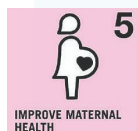
NCDs THREATEN THE ATTAINMENT OF GLOBALLY ENDORSED DEVELOPMENT TARGETS SUCH AS THE MDGS. Some examples include:



- **MDG 1 ON POVERTY AND NUTRITION:**
The NCD epidemic is growing faster in poor countries and poorer communities.



- **MDG 4 ON REDUCING CHILD MORTALITY:**
Tobacco use by mothers increases the chances of low birth weight; infants whose mothers smoke weigh on average 200 grams less than infants of non-smoking mothers.



- **MDG 1 ON NUTRITION AND MDG 5 ON IMPROVING MATERNAL HEALTH:**
Money spent on tobacco, alcohol use, and costly out-of-pocket expenditure on medicines for chronic diseases means less money available for feeding children.



- **MDG 5 ON IMPROVING MATERNAL HEALTH:**
Tobacco, obesity and diabetes create high-risk conditions for pregnant women.



- **MDG 6 ON HIV/AIDS, TB AND MALARIA:**
Some people with diabetes are at an increased risk of contracting TB. HIV/AIDS is associated with higher rates of some types of cancer.
- **MDG 8 ON PARTNERSHIPS:**
Only one-third of NCD essential medicines are available in public health facilities in developing countries.