

## **UICC Statement on the Political Declaration of the UN High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases**

**September 2011**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) welcomes the Political Declaration (hereafter “Declaration”) adopted at the High-level Meeting (HLM) on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011. We congratulate UN Member States for their acknowledgement that cancer and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are a challenge of epidemic proportions that require a co-ordinated and sustainable response on a global scale. We also thank the co-facilitators, H.E. Raymond Wolfe, Permanent Representative of Jamaica and H.E. Sylvie Lucas, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg for the successful adoption of an outcomes document, and the members of the Civil Society Task Force co-chaired by the UICC President Dr Eduardo Cazap for their dedication in representing the voice of civil society.

Since the 13th May 2010, when the United Nations voted unanimously for UN Resolution 64/265 to hold a UN HLM on NCDs in September 2011, UICC has been working to achieve its primary objective to secure an outcomes document from the UN HLM which supports the long term delivery of the 11 targets contained in the World Cancer Declaration. Additionally, as a founding member of the NCD Alliance, UICC has been at the forefront of the civil society campaign to put NCDs on the global political agenda.

The outcomes document achieved at this HLM - known as a political declaration - is only the second of its kind to address a health issue on a global scale, the first being the outcomes document from the 2001 UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS. UICC is committed to working with Governments and policy makers, the World Health Organization (WHO), other UN Agencies, private sector, academia and civil society and other stakeholders to implement the commitments set out in this Declaration as well as to continue to advocate for additional measures to ensure the burden of cancer is reduced in all countries and the targets of the World Cancer Declaration are met by 2020.

## **THE POLITICAL DECLARATION OF THE UN HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON NCDs**

The Political Declaration recognises the scale of the NCD crisis and the urgent need for action. The acknowledgement of the direct impact of NCDs on social and economic development, and the recognition that NCDs pose a major threat to the economies of many Member States provide a strong impetus for governments to realise the commitments in this Declaration through sustained involvement and sound leadership across the whole of government.

In line with the targets of the World Cancer Declaration, UICC strongly supports the call for strengthening international cooperation in support of national, regional, and global plans for the prevention and control of NCDs, and welcomes commitments to:

- Promote, establish or support and strengthen, by 2013, multisectoral national policies and plans for the prevention and control of NCDs
- Strengthen information systems for health planning and management and the development of population based national registries and surveys
- Reduce individuals' exposure to NCD risk factors through international agreements, legal and regulatory measures
- Improve access to palliative care
- Increase access to affordable, safe, effective and quality medicines and technology
- Build further capacity in the workforce skilled to prevent and manage NCDs

Additionally, the Declaration clearly acknowledges cancer as a unique disease in many respects, with specific commitments to prevention and early detection. UICC welcome commitments to:

- Give greater priority to early detection, screening and diagnosis of NCDs including cancer screening programmes (particularly breast and cervical cancer)
- Increase access to Hepatitis B and HPV vaccines as part of national immunisation programmes to prevent infection-related cancers

However, there remain some areas where commitments fall short of expectations. The Declaration lacks specific targets including no overall goal of reducing preventable deaths. More work is now needed to convince governments around the world to commit to reduce the avoidable deaths from NCDs by 25% by 2025 - a target WHO believes to be achievable. In addition, although the Declaration acknowledges that the resources devoted to combating NCDs are not commensurate with the magnitude of the problem, there are no commitments to increase the proportion of development assistance devoted to health outcomes. The responsibility is now

with civil society and other stakeholders to continue to advocate for these outcomes in the lead up to the comprehensive review and assessment that will take place in 2014.

## **AFTER THE UN HIGH-LEVEL MEETING - NEXT STEPS**

The Political Declaration of the UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs is an important rallying point for the global cancer community. UICC will continue its global advocacy campaign and support member organisations to lobby governments to implement the agreed actions and to advocate for further measures to reduce avoidable deaths from cancer. This is critical in the years immediately following the HLM whilst the political momentum generated by the HLM is strong. Of equal importance is that the Declaration is a major milestone in a long-term strategy to achieve the 11 World Cancer Declaration targets by 2020, and provides a robust platform to launch the next stage of action in a number of key areas for cancer, including:

### **1. Development of targets and indicators to measure the implementation of policies and approaches to prevent and control cancer**

WHO has been tasked to present targets and recommendations for improved plans and policies to strengthen NCD prevention and control to Member States and to establish a system of monitoring, evaluation and accountability in time for the 2013 World Health Assembly. It is critical for UICC through its partners and member organisations to advocate for appropriate evidence-based indicators that can and will be measured and monitored appropriately and that are consistent with national and regional priorities.

### **2. Raising the priority accorded to cancer in the global development agenda.**

As a result of the Political Declaration, world leaders understand that cancer and other NCDs are not currently addressed in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and are significantly hampering progress towards these goals. The potential for inclusion of cancer-specific outcomes into the post-2015 MDG agenda and other future global development goals provides a mechanism and framework for a coordinated approach to addressing and monitoring progress towards the 11 World Cancer Declaration targets for 2020. UICC along with existing and new partners will work towards this goal as well as to achieve increases in the level of aid to health and NCDs.

### **3. Promoting a multisectoral response to cancer**

UICC strongly supports the call for strengthening and facilitation of multisectoral action for the prevention and control of NCDs, recognising that cancer requires action beyond the public health agenda to encompass a multisectoral response involving not just Ministries of Health, but also the financial, agricultural, legal, trade, social and development sectors. The ability for UICC

to play a niche role as a global representative for cancer advocates remains unique. In practice, this requires a commitment to be the 'voice of cancer' at major events, and to continue to develop strong strategic partnerships across different health disciplines (research, clinical services, health promotion, cancer survivors, pharmaceutical industry, etc) and sectors outside of health (e.g., World Bank, World Economic Forum, private sector, development agencies, World Trade Organization). UICC will capitalise on its position to facilitate multisectoral action, in achieving both the outcomes stated in the Declaration but also additional measures for meeting cancer-specific goals.

## **CONCLUSION**

The last two years have seen significant progress in moving cancer onto the global health agenda. By having the UN HLM and agreement on a political declaration on NCDs, the process of addressing NCDs globally has been set in motion in the most powerful way. UICC is dedicated to begin working together with governments to ensure that they live up to their commitments. UICC and its members will begin the next phase of their advocacy campaign at the World Cancer Leaders' Summit in Dublin in November where a response to the UN HLM will be outlined in detail.

Every month another 600,000 people die of cancer, which with the right strategies, could have been prevented or treated. The UN HLM on NCDs is a start, not an end.

## **ABOUT UICC**

UICC is a membership organisation that exists to help the global health community accelerate the fight against cancer.

Founded in 1933 and based in Geneva, UICC's growing membership of over 460 organisations across 120 countries, features the world's major cancer societies, ministries of health, research institutes, treatment centres and patient groups. Together with its members, the World Health Organization, World Economic Forum and other key partners, UICC is tackling the growing cancer crisis on a global scale.

It has responsibility for the World Cancer Declaration, World Cancer Day, the World Cancer Congress and the World Cancer Leaders' Summit. Additionally, it is a founding member of the NCD Alliance, a global civil society network that now represents almost 2000 NCD organisations in 170 countries.