



November 2011 :

Message from Trevor Shilton, the IUHPE Vice-President
for Advocacy

Dear Member,

Two months ago UN Member States gathered in New York to pass a Political Declaration on Non-communicable diseases (NCDs). In this Declaration the UN made a historic commitment to take urgent action to address the global NCD crisis.

Final HLM Political Declaration: click [here](#) for English and [here](#) for translations

IUHPE advocacy

The IUHPE has identified NCD prevention as a strategic priority and the IUHPE recognized that this UN meeting was a potential watershed for increased global attention to health promotion. Our Union was very active in the months preceding the UN meeting in preparing a 'key messages' document and in widely disseminating this to promote our common call to action. <http://www.iuhpe.org/index.html?page=51&lang=en>

The key messages that the IUHPE took to New York were a call for:

1. An expanded role for comprehensive health promotion;
2. Coordinated actions that impact on the determinants that underpin the NCDs epidemic across populations;
3. Health systems to redirect resources to health promotion and prevention of NCDs and prioritize health promotion as an essential function of the Departments of Health;
4. Expansion of engagement with sectors outside health where many of the economic, social, and environmental policy solutions to NCDs can be best advanced;
5. Increased investment in ensuring a health promotion workforce that is prominently placed and equipped with the core competencies to implement current knowledge, policies and practices;
6. A specific and considered approach to the three critical areas of healthy eating, physical activity and tobacco control, and agreement to robust indicators in each of these three areas; and
7. A central focus on equity both between and within nations, and a specific focus on addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups.

The IUHPE was represented at the New York UN High Level Meeting by Immediate Past President David McQueen and Global Vice President for Advocacy, Trevor Shilton.



The UN High Level meeting

The two-day High-Level General Assembly was attended by more than 30 heads of State and Government and at least 100 other senior ministers and experts. The meeting agreed to a declaration calling for a multi-pronged campaign by governments, industry and civil society to set up by 2013 the plans needed to curb the risk factors and the causes of the causes behind the four groups of NCDs – cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes.

Three in every five deaths in the world are from NCDs and the future prognosis is grim with a likely 17% increase in the next decade. The meeting noted that while the statistics are alarming there are cost-effective ways to impact quickly on these diseases. Policy interventions are both effective and inexpensive. The imperative for political leadership at the highest level is evident, as is the need for action across Government and engagement with the whole of Government - transport, schools, agriculture, planning, as well as the private sector, NGOs and civil society. These issues are picked up strongly in the IUHPE's 'key messages'.

The political declaration:

- Is a great start. It is a strongly worded document that will accelerate the international progress on NCDs
- It will provide a framework for saving millions of people from preventable death and disability due to NCDs.
- It falls short in some key areas. The overarching goal and set of time-bound targets is missing, but there is a commitment to develop in 2012 a set of global targets and indicators. This will be led by the WHO.
- Member states have agreed to hold a comprehensive review in 2014. This is good as it will necessitate review of commitments in the current declaration.
- Some contentious, contested, and controversial issues were supported e.g.
 - Commitment to accelerate the implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.
 - Commitment to eliminate industrially produced trans fats in foods, and to implement initiatives to reduce consumption of salt, sugars and saturated fats.
 - Member states have agreed to introduce policies and actions to promote healthy diets and increase physical activity in the entire population.
 - While the declaration acknowledges the importance of increasing taxes to reduce tobacco consumption, the language on curbing the harmful use of alcohol, is weak (no mention of price and availability, or marketing).
 - Agreement to recommendations to restrict marketing to children of foods high in fats, sugar and salt – and to reverse the rising trends in obesity in children, youth and adults.

The Declaration also calls for increased resources for NCD Prevention.

NCDs have finally made it to the UN, and that is a good thing.



IUHPE

INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR HEALTH PROMOTION
AND EDUCATION

The future

UN Secretary General Ban ki Moon called the High Level meeting the 'end of the beginning'. He stressed that much still needed to be done to ensure real commitments followed.

The IUHPE has a vital ongoing role to promote our seven key messages that will ensure a health promotion approach is adopted.

The IUHPE and other civil society organizations have sent a clear message to governments around the world that "business as usual" for NCDs' is not enough. We expect action and accountability.

Think about how you, as a member of IUHPE, can help advocate for this NCD initiative as it relates to health promotion. Two suggestions:

- ❖ Ensure that your government takes action on the commitments it made at the High Level Meeting; send the Political Declaration and the IUHPE Key messages document to your Head of State and Minister for Health, Foreign Affairs, International Development, Finance, Trade and Agriculture.
- ❖ Build support for the Declaration among your networks and regions, in civil society and in the media.