

NCD Alliance takes 'The Elephant in the Room' to major EU Development Conference

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Brussels, Belgium 06 December 2010 NCDs cause 60% of all global deaths, but receive just 2.3% of international development assistance for health. 80% of deaths caused by NCDs occur in developing countries. Yet, the international community displays no sense of urgency or outrage about NCDs, the silent killer that is threatening development and economic progress.

These are the messages the NCD Alliance delivered to the global development community today at the European Development Days Conference, a global forum being held in Brussels featuring prominent world leaders and more than 400 international development agencies and donors.

The glaring omission of NCDs from the global development agenda is reflected in the programme of the EU forum, with the biggest killer in the world failing to get a mention at this important international development forum. For this reason, the NCD Alliance decided to fill the gap by holding a side-session on NCDs in least developed countries.

The neglect of NCDs was highlighted by the NCD Alliance session as 'the elephant in the room' that the international development community chooses to ignore. An NCD elephant was present for the side-session and greeted conference participants and journalists in the main lobby of the EU conference. The panel, made up of IDF President Jean Claude Mbanya, IDF CEO and Chair of the NCD Alliance Steering Group Ann Keeling, and WHO Health Systems Adviser Badara Samb, assessed the current challenges of the global NCD epidemic, and looked ahead to September 2011 when the United Nations will hold a UN High Level Summit on this neglected health and development issue. NCDs have a severe impact on individuals, communities and countries, undermining the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The omission of NCDs from the MDGs targets has been a critical barrier to securing donor funding for NCDs, which cause 8 million premature deaths every year in low and middle-income countries. "Currently, donor countries are operating a policy ban on funding NCDs, thereby starving low-income governments of the financial and technical assistance needed to turn around the NCD epidemic. This policy has to change, with overseas development assistance aligned to the priorities of recipient countries," said Professor Mbanya.

In May 2010, United Nations member states unanimously voted in favour of a High Level Summit on Non-

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Communicable Diseases (NCDs) to be held in September 2011 in New York. A similar UN summit on HIV/AIDS in 2001 proved to be a turning point for the disease, resulting in significant funding and political commitment to a coordinated action plan.

Press Release [here](#). [1]

Photos: http://www.eudevdays.eu/photo_coverage_en.cfm [2]

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