



## Appointment of President Robert Mugabe as WHO Goodwill Ambassador for NCDs in Africa

### STATEMENT

On 18-20 October 2017, the President of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay Tabaré Vazquez and WHO convened 400 delegates from across governments, UN agencies, civil society and the private sector in Montevideo for the WHO Global Conference on NCDs. The

Conference was an important demonstration of political leadership on NCDs and is a crucial milestone in moving towards the 2018 UN High-level Meeting on NCDs.

During the Conference, WHO Director General Dr Tedros announced that President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe would become a WHO Goodwill Ambassador for noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in Africa.

While we recognise that President Mugabe was the only African Head of State to accept the invitation to attend the WHO Global Conference and has made commitments to prioritise NCDs in his country, nevertheless members of the NCD civil society movement present at the conference are shocked and deeply concerned to hear of this appointment, given President Mugabe's long track record of human rights violations and undermining the dignity of human beings.

Given these systematic abuses and his approach to NCDs and tobacco control in the past, NCD civil society present in Montevideo believe that President Mugabe's appointment as WHO Goodwill Ambassador for NCDs cannot be justified.

We have raised these concerns with WHO DG Dr Tedros during a meeting with civil society on the side-lines of the Montevideo conference. While we support WHO and Dr Tedros in their ambition to drive the NCD agenda forward, we are unable to recognise President Mugabe as a champion for NCDs.

20/10/2017

---