



MANIFESTO TO THE PRESIDENTS OF THE AMERICAS: HEALTH FIRST

A healthier world is possible. Beat Non-Communicable Diseases NCDs

Civil society organizations from most countries of the Americas are united in requesting Heads of State participating in the VIII Summit of the Americas (April 13-14, 2018 in Lima, Peru) that they attend the United Nations High Level Meeting on NCDs, scheduled for September 27, 2018 in New York City, and that they assume an urgent commitment to public health by implementing policies to confront NCDs. In the Americas, NCDs—cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and chronic respiratory illnesses—represent approximately 80% of all causes of death and 35% of premature deaths and have been recognized as one of the principal challenges for sustainable development in the 21st century worldwide.

Currently two out of three people die worldwide due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs): cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, diabetes, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases. These are people who could have otherwise lived longer, given more hugs to their loved ones, enjoyed longer the miracle of life.

Premature death is only part of the problem. Living with an NCD entails loss of quality of life, higher expenses, dependence on medicines, and it affects the emotional well-being of patients and those around them. Reducing NCDs is about quality of life and happiness.

Humanity has made enormous advance in health care, eradicating diseases that killed millions of people, but it has yet to fulfill its promise to protect people from NCDs.

NCDs are major health problems for all economic groups, but are especially prevalent among the world's poorest, those with little education and few resources.

The financial burden to fight NCDs is also a problem for low-income countries. NCDs are a barrier for economic development, they reduce productivity and, moreover, they divert resources to disease treatment which could be otherwise used for productive purposes.

In 2015, WHO Director Margaret Chang said, "By investing 1 to 3 dollars per person per year, countries can dramatically reduce both prevalence and NCD deaths." The cost of prevention is negligible for most national budgets.

However, the response to the increase in NCDs has been slow and insufficient, even though nowadays we know that sustainable development is not possible without a commitment to improve people's health.

We ask governments to assume their responsibility for addressing NCDs with concrete and effective measures to protect the health of the population and reduce NCDs' impact. This can be done by implementing public policies that reduce consumption of salt, sugar sweetened beverages and processed



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foods with saturated fats; reduce use of alcohol and tobacco; increase the price of unhealthy products; promote physical activity; and provide universal access to medications and healthcare.

On the commitment to prevent NCDs and not just to be reactive to this global epidemic hinges the future of a healthier world with more hugs, more love, and more happiness.

For that reason, I sign and promise to invite others to sign this manifesto. **#healthfirst #ENOUGH #beatNCDs**

Name.....Signature Organization City/Country..... Email