



WORLD **DIABETES** FOUNDATION

WDF PRESS RELEASE

One of the most significant 21st century public health challenges addressed by leading specialists

Lottenborgvej 24
DK-2800 Kgs. Lyngby
Denmark

Phone +45 44 42 74 38
Fax +45 44 44 47 52

contact@worlddiabetesfoundation.org
www.worlddiabetesfoundation.org

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
Viet Nam



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Hanoi, Vietnam, 19th February 2006, – World-renowned health experts will gather at the World Diabetes Foundation (WDF) Diabetes Summit, 21st – 23rd February, to address one of the world's leading health challenges. Diabetes is predicted to be one of the major health crisis of the 21st century. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates the global diabetes population will grow to more than 200 million in 2010 and 330 million in 2025, with developing countries bearing the brunt of this epidemic in the 21st century.¹

The aim of the Hanoi summit, hosted by the WDF, Ministry of Health in Vietnam and the Western Pacific Declaration on Diabetes*, which includes the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), IDF and WHO, is to highlight the rising prevalence of diabetes and its complications in the developing world and develop strategies to reduce the socio-economic burden it poses. The summit will be the first of a series of global initiatives that bring together international experts from the WHO, International Diabetes Federation (IDF), national health authorities and academics. The Hanoi summit focuses on Asia, which is home to four of the world's five largest diabetic populations - India, 33 million; China, 23 million; Pakistan, 9 million; and Japan, 7 million.²

"We see the summit as a forum for interaction between the key diabetes stakeholders and WDF partners, aimed at creating a network of committed global influencers who can drive the agenda on diabetes prevention and care in the developing world. The ultimate aim is to encourage governments worldwide, policy-makers, and funding bodies to prioritise diabetes care, allowing the implementation of much-needed sustainable and far-reaching solutions", explains Professor Pierre Lefèbvre, President of the IDF and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the WDF.

The summit will showcase two WDF-funded community-based pilot projects, which the Vietnamese Ministry of Health plans to roll out nationally in Vietnam in 2006. The projects place a strong emphasis on prevention strategies and sustainable solutions to diabetes care, demonstrating the benefits of integrating support from multiple



stakeholders on national and international levels. Based on the success of these projects, the WDF hopes to implement similar projects in developing countries around the world.

“We are delighted to see the success of these initial community-based projects in Vietnam and believe they demonstrate the huge potential that can be achieved by taking a community-based approach to diabetes prevention and care, and pooling the resources, skills and expertise of both national and international partners,” said Prof Tran Thi Trung Chien, Minister of Health, Viet Nam.

The importance of a preventative approach is crucial in the developing world, in order to avoid the huge social and economic impact of the predicted diabetes pandemic. The need is particularly strong in societies undergoing rapid economic transition, such as India, China and Vietnam. In the Western Pacific region, where over 60% of the world’s diabetic population resides, the largest rise in diabetes incidence is likely to occur in economically-productive age groups (20 – 64 years of age).³ If predictions of diabetes prevalence for 2025 are correct, total healthcare expenditure on diabetes worldwide for that year will be between \$213 billion and \$396 billion (USD). In some developing countries this will be as much as 40% of their total healthcare budget.⁴

“If we do not act now, the huge cost of diabetes care and the loss of productivity due to illness will impose a heavy economic burden on Vietnam and many other developing countries in the future”, explains Dr Hans Troedsson, WHO Representative in Vietnam. *“Many of the complications of type 2 diabetes that contribute to the high cost of diabetes, such as foot ulcers, blindness, limb amputations and kidney failure are potentially preventable by early diagnosis and effective diabetes management”* he adds.

In many developing countries, public health advocacy to date has been mainly devoted to infectious diseases. However, there are now major public health issues arising from chronic diseases that need to be addressed with equal energy and focus.

“Diabetes is one of the most significant public health challenges of this century as well as an opportunity to improve public health by promoting healthy living. This is precisely where WDF is committed to make a significant change in creating awareness, prevention at all levels and improvement of care for people with diabetes. By supporting 57 projects in more than 65 countries in the developing world the Foundation has to date made a direct impact on 24 million people”, explains Dr Anil Kapur, Vice Chairman WDF.

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Spotlight on the community-based projects in Vietnam

The projects are distinctive in the sense that they introduce a community-based approach, with the formation of local diabetes associations as one of the project cornerstones. Two pilot provinces, (Thai Binh and Thanh Hoa) involving 35 districts, 40 local centres and a population of around 1 million people, have been selected to test the programme ahead of the nationwide roll-out. Diabetes has been prioritised as a public health problem by the Government of Vietnam since 2001, and in 2002 they issued a national strategy for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.⁵ Prevention of diabetes is an important component of this national strategy, as currently 2-2.5 million Vietnamese people (2.4-3% of the population) suffer from diabetes.⁶

Notes to editors

*The Western Pacific Declaration on Diabetes

The Western Pacific Declaration on Diabetes is a joint effort by the WHO, the International Diabetes Federation, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to bring diabetes to the attention of professionals and policy-makers in the Region. Website: www.wpdd.org

The World Diabetes Foundation

The World Diabetes Foundation is dedicated to supporting prevention and treatment of diabetes in the developing world through funding of sustainable projects in education, capacity building, distribution and procurement of essential drugs and monitoring. The Foundation creates partnerships and acts as a catalyst to help others do more. The World Diabetes Foundation strives to educate and provide advocacy globally in an effort to create awareness, care and relief to those impacted by diabetes.

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References

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For further information please contact

Jamal Butt

Communication Manager

Phone direct: +45 44 43 47 36

Mobile: +45 30 75 47 36

Email: JmBu@worlddiabetesfoundation.org

Dida Connor

Communications Officer

World Health Organization

63 Tran Hung Dao Street,

Hanoi, Viet Nam

Tel: (84-4) 943 3734/5/6

Fax: (84-4) 943 3740

Mobile: 0915 413814

E-Mail: didac@vtn.wpro.who.int

media@vtn.wpro.who.int

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The World Diabetes Foundation was founded in March 2002 by Novo Nordisk. The founder has pledged to donate 500 million DKK (approx. 83 million USD) over a period of 10 years to the foundation. The Foundation is governed independently of Novo Nordisk by a 5 member board of directors, comprised of experts in the fields of diabetes and access to health in developing countries. The Foundation is registered in Denmark as an independent trust.

For further information about World Diabetes Foundation and diabetes in the developing countries please consult the Foundation's website at: www.worlddiabetesfoundation.org