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## WDF PRESS RELEASE

### **Diabetes and Non-communicable Diseases – now considered as big a threat to Africa as HIV/AIDS**

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Nairobi, Kenya, 27 June 2007 – Leading global health experts, ministers of health, donors and national health authorities will convene at the Diabetes Summit Africa to discuss the growing prevalence of diabetes in the developing world, especially Africa, and develop strategies for managing what is predicted to be the major health crisis of the 21st century.

The summit will also highlight the rising prevalence of diabetes in the African region; develop prevention strategies to reduce the burden; and initiate and support much needed sustainable, local national programme for diabetes prevention and care.

In 2007 diabetes is expected to result in 3.8 million deaths (or 6% of world mortality), the same figure as HIV/AIDS. Unless preventative measures are taken, 380 million people worldwide will have diabetes by 2025, with the largest increase occurring in developing countries.<sup>1</sup>

The summit is organised by the World Diabetes Foundation (WDF) in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Kenya, the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Africa and the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Africa Region.

Diabetes is now regarded as a major health threat in Africa, and, according to IDF estimates, the number of people with diabetes in Africa will almost double in the 15 years leading up to 2010.<sup>2</sup> The WHO has set a global objective of reducing death rates due to chronic diseases by 2% a year over the next ten years. This could prevent 36 million premature deaths by 2015.<sup>3</sup>

“In African nations such as Kenya, the need is becoming ever-more urgent to shift the focus of public health initiatives to prevention of chronic diseases such as diabetes,” explains Dr David Okello, World Health Organization Country Representative for Kenya. “We are pleased to welcome key stakeholders not only from Africa, but across the globe to the Diabetes Summit, to discuss procedures for tackling chronic disease at the country level and ensure effective and sustainable approaches are taken.”

#### References

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2. A diabetes strategy for Africa: investing in health, protecting our people: *Diabetes Voice*: September 2006; Volume 51, Issue 3
3. Preventing Chronic Diseases: a vital investment. WHO global report [http://www.who.int/chp/chronic\\_disease\\_report/contents/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/chp/chronic_disease_report/contents/en/index.html)



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Prior to the Summit, the Kenya Diabetes Management and Information Centre (DMI) will showcase their education programme for healthcare professionals and public awareness projects supported by WDF, to demonstrate how effective collaboration can work on a practical level. The WDF has provided financial support to set up 42 clinics, 200 mini clinics and diabetes awareness programmes where people can learn about diabetes prevention through activities conducted in health facilities, faith-based organisations/institutions, community halls, schools and workplaces. The effects of these awareness and education activities are expected to reach an estimated 6,000,000 people in Kenya. The education component will also help provide training to 500 doctors, 3000 nurses, 250 dieticians, 1000 paramedics and 2700 lay educators.

“These programmes demonstrate a very successful partnership between the DMI, World Diabetes Foundation and the Ministry of Health, whereby all diabetes care capacity is established within the existing healthcare system, ensuring a sustainable approach and strong local commitment from the government of Kenya. We sincerely hope that in our neighbouring nations our efforts will encourage similar projects that can evolve into national non-communicable disease programmes in the long term. We are delighted to co-host this important summit,” said Her Excellency Charity Kaluki Ngilu, Minister for Health, of the Republic of Kenya.

Increasing awareness and preventative strategies is crucial in developing countries, as proper control of blood glucose, blood pressure and lipids can potentially prevent many of the devastating complications of diabetes that make the economic cost of diabetes so high, such as hypertension, heart attacks, limb amputations, kidney failure and blindness.<sup>4</sup> However, it is estimated that African countries use less than ten percent of their public health budgets on preventing and treating non-communicable diseases, because health policy decision makers are more preoccupied with communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, in these countries individuals and their families bear the brunt of medical expenditures. According to the International Labour Organisation, 80% of people in developing countries pay directly for some or all of their own medicine, thus meaning that poor and middle-income families must struggle to pay for vital diabetes services.<sup>6</sup> If governments fail to address the increase in diabetes now, the world's poorest countries will be unable to provide even the cheapest diabetes treatments.<sup>7</sup>

“Diabetes is predominantly perceived as a ‘disease of the rich’, occurring in Western countries. In reality, however, more than three quarters of diabetes-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries,” explains Professor Pierre Lefèbvre, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the WDF. “Another misconception is that the common form of

#### References

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<http://www.wpdd.org>
5. World Diabetes Foundation Annual Report 2005
6. International Diabetes Federation Diabetes Atlas, second edition
7. International Diabetes Federation Diabetes Atlas, third edition: The economic impacts of diabetes



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diabetes (type 2) is a mild condition that does not kill, yet every ten seconds a person dies from diabetes related conditions and complications. People in poorer countries have much higher rates of serious complications because of delayed diagnosis and poor disease management.’

The upcoming Diabetes Summit in Kenya will be the first major diabetes event in Africa since the adoption of the United Nations Resolution on Diabetes and the launch of the ‘Diabetes Declaration and Strategy for Africa’ (December, 2006), an initiative that also called on policymakers, industry and the public sector to reduce the societal and personal costs of diabetes, especially in Africa.

The social and economic burden of diabetes will be greatest in the developing world.<sup>8</sup> Ageing populations, families that are urbanized as they seek employment, rapid industrialization and rising levels of obesity associated with dietary changes and decreased physical activity are all contributing to this increase. 10.4 million Africans now have diabetes (3.1% of the adult population), and 24.2 million people have impaired glucose tolerance (or raised blood sugar), which can lead to diabetes.<sup>9</sup>

“Every day in Africa, large numbers of children and adults die because they cannot receive the basic care and treatment they need to survive; many more die before a diagnosis can be made. Treating diabetes in the poorest countries is not expensive. However, in both social and economic terms not treating diabetes is very costly. Better awareness, early diagnosis and basic effective treatment can largely prevent the costly complications of diabetes,” explains Dr Anil Kapur, Managing Director of the WDF.

To date, the WDF has funded 110 projects in 71 countries focusing on diabetes awareness, education and better access to care at local, regional and global levels. Over the next three to four years, the Foundation’s programmes are set to positively impact 55.1 million people in the developing world.

#### References

8. International Diabetes Federation Diabetes Atlas, third edition: executive summary
9. International Diabetes Federation Diabetes Atlas, third edition: prevalence and projections



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## Notes to editors

### **Diabetes Declaration and Strategy for Africa**

The International Diabetes Federation Africa Region launched the Diabetes Declaration and Strategy for Africa in December 2006 at the 19th World Diabetes Congress in Cape Town. The purpose of the Diabetes Declaration for Africa is to raise community and political awareness about diabetes and to improve diabetes care by working through a coalition of individuals, communities, corporations and governments. The Diabetes Declaration and Diabetes Strategy for Africa cover those sub-Saharan African countries generally known as East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa. They focus on the three major forms of diabetes – type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes. The vision, recommendations and strategies proposed in the Declaration and Strategy span the continuum of care from pre-diabetes through diagnosis, routine monitoring and care to the onset of complications and palliation.

### **The UN Resolution on Diabetes**

On 20 December 2006 the United Nations General Assembly passed a landmark resolution recognizing diabetes as a chronic, debilitating and costly disease associated with major complications that pose severe risks for families, countries and the entire world. For the first time, governments have acknowledged that a non-infectious disease is as serious a global threat as infectious epidemics. The resolution has designated November 14 as a United Nations Day to be observed every year, starting in 2007. It calls on all nations to develop national policies for the prevention, treatment and care of diabetes in line with the sustainable development of their healthcare systems. The campaign for a UN resolution on diabetes, led by the IDF, has brought together the largest ever diabetes coalition, including IDF member associations, the WDF, the majority of the world's scientific and professional diabetes societies, many charitable foundations and service organizations, as well as industry.

Website; [www.unitefordiabtes.org](http://www.unitefordiabtes.org)

### **Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Health**

The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Health has recognized the growing burden of the diabetes problem now on the rise. This is why the Division of Non-communicable Diseases (DNCD) was established in the Ministry of Health in 2001 to tackle high-priority, non-communicable diseases. The division has worked closely with diabetes control stakeholders, like Diabetes Management and Information (DMI), with support from World Health Organization, World Diabetes Foundation and IDF. In conjunction with the Diabetes Management and Information (DMI) Centre, the division of non-communicable diseases has been able to train over 1,500 frontline health workers on diabetes management in several health facilities nationwide in the last two years. This partnership has made it possible to open over 41 diabetes clinics providing care for diabetic patients throughout the country. The aim of the Ministry of Health is to have a national Diabetes Control Programme (DCP) that will take a comprehensive approach to diabetes care in the whole country. This will call



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for continued partnership with all stakeholders for the common good of all. Our mission is to promote and participate in the provision of integrated and high-quality promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative healthcare services to all Kenyans.

Website: [www.health.go.ke](http://www.health.go.ke)

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### **The World Diabetes Foundation**

World Diabetes Foundation is dedicated to supporting prevention and treatment of diabetes in the developing world through funding of sustainable projects. The WDF strives to educate and advocate globally in an effort to create awareness, care and relief to those impacted by diabetes.

The WDF presently supports 110 projects with a total portfolio of USD 105.2 million of which USD 33.6 million are donated by the Foundation. The projects funded by the WDF will in the coming 3-4 years potentially influence the diabetes treatment of 55.1 million people directly in the developing countries. The WDF was founded in March 2002 by Novo Nordisk A/S and is governed independently of Novo Nordisk by a 6 member Board of Directors. The WDF is registered in Denmark as an independent trust. For further information please visit our website: [www.worlddiabetesfoundation.org](http://www.worlddiabetesfoundation.org)

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