



International Diabetes Federation

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Speaker: IDF President Prof Jean Claude Mbanya

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Professor Lefébvre, Dr Hospedales, Dr Meiro-Lorenzo Dr Glass, Dr Alwan, Dr Rodgers, His Excellency Mr Temporão, His Excellency Mr Wagner, ladies and gentlemen,

It's a pleasure to be here at this Diabetes Summit for Latin America. Thank you to the World Diabetes Foundation, the Pan American Health Organization and the Brazilian Ministry of Health for organizing what is bound to be a stimulating, informative meeting.

Ladies and gentleman, as I address you here in beautiful Bahia, there is a



battle raging in the outside world... A battle in which Latin America and the Caribbean has suffered many casualties.

Diabetes is now responsible for more than 9% of all adult deaths in South and Central America. Brazil and Mexico are among the world's top 10 countries with the largest population of people with diabetes. Nearby, in the Caribbean, between 10 and 12% of adults have diabetes, much higher than the world average of 6.4%. And may I remind you that these are figures of today. If nothing is done, if no action is taken, we will have an even bigger problem on our hands tomorrow. The IDF Diabetes Atlas predicts that half a billion – yes, **HALF A BILLION** - people will have diabetes by 2030.

The pandemic does not only cause large-scale death and disability, it is also a major barrier to development in low- and middle-income countries. Diabetes, together with other NCDs, imposes heavy costs on national health care systems and economies, affecting breadwinners in families and



plunging entire communities into poverty. Again, without action, this socio-economic burden will only worsen. **For so many people with diabetes, insulin is their oxygen. They need it to survive. But yet, this life-saving drug – discovered more than 88 years ago - is inaccessible to them.**

But there has been encouraging news, particularly from Latin America and the Caribbean, which have been leading the way in finding local, regional, and global solutions for the treatment and prevention of diabetes and other NCDs. The 2001 Nassau Declaration on Health and the establishment of a revised Caribbean Charter on Health was just the beginning. This was followed by the merging of the various Regional Health Institutions into the Caribbean Public Health Agency, which then implemented a comprehensive strategy for the prevention and control of NCDs. In 2007, the first-ever Summit on NCDs was held in the Port of Spain, Trinidad.



When fighting such a global epidemic, partnerships are key. The International Diabetes Federation fully supports partnership-based approaches.

Governments alone cannot solve a global challenge of this magnitude; it will take a concerted effort that involves civil society, the research community, international agencies, and industry. Prevention will especially require broad dialogue across all sectors — including health, food and agriculture, urban design, and transport — as well as radical rethinking on how we live and our concepts of 'development', progress, and what constitutes a 'good life'.

Partnerships and forums between diverse groups are the only way we can take action and have the necessary global and multi-sectoral conversations.

The NCD Alliance provides proof of the enormous power of partnerships. We formed the alliance last year with our sister federations — the World Heart Federation and the International Union Against Cancer — because we knew we would be more effective in getting NCDs on the global agenda by speaking with one voice. This year we were joined by the International Union Against



Tuberculosis and Lung Disease. Together, we represent 880 national member associations in over 170 countries. We also work with a broad range of NGO partners, including the Framework Convention Alliance, as well as international organisations and governments.

Our first major campaign was for a United Nations Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases — and on May 13 this year, the world changed for all of us when UN member states unanimously voted in favour of a High Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on NCDs to be held in September 2011. As Guyana’s Health Minister Dr Leslie Ramsammy — who has long argued for action on NCDs — said in his address to the Commonwealth Ministers of Health Meeting in Geneva three days after the resolution passed, this “paves the way for a truly global commitment and effective collective action to stem the tide and create a global empowerment for the prevention and control of NCDs”.



The summit will take action on NCDs to a new level: raising the profile of these too-long neglected diseases, mobilizing the international community, securing commitments from Heads of State, and sending a clear message to donors and funders on the importance of tackling NCDs.

This milestone success was a perfect example of civil society working together with governments and the World Health Organization towards a common goal. The CARICOM heads of government deserve enormous credit for recognizing the need for a Summit on NCDs and then spearheading the resolution through the UN. The first UN briefing on the Summit, which was organised by Caribbean Ambassadors, took place on the 5th of February this year. It then took these Ambassadors, with strong support from civil society across the globe, just over 3 months to secure the support of more than 130 co-sponsors for the unanimous passage of UN Resolution 64/265 on 13 May. That is support from the whole UN general assembly, including the USA, the BRIC countries, the entire Caribbean, the G8, and all 54 African Union



countries.

This is one of the most widely supported, and most quickly passed, UN Resolutions on a development issue in recent memory. It is also a best-practice example of what a broad global partnership can achieve when government, civil society, academia, and other key stakeholders work together in pursuit of a clear and focused objective.

In addition to the CARICOM states, I would also like to thank Brazil — which played a key role in helping to make the case for the NCD Summit at the UN briefing in February. I know that Dr. Deborah Carvalho Malta, a coordinator at the Brazilian Ministry of Health's National Surveillance NCD Program, presented to the UN on behalf of Brazil. I would like to thank other South and Central American countries for their critical support as early champions for the NCD Summit.



I'd also like to recognize Dr Ala Alwan, who will speak later this evening, for the creation of the WHO's NCDnet: the Global Non-Communicable Disease Network. IDF is pleased to sit on the International Advisory Council for NCDnet, which brings together a broad range of partners from civil society, government, and international agencies, as well as other partners such as the World Economic Forum. This gives us enormous potential for a broad dialogue across multiple sectors.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is an exciting time to be working in the prevention and control of diabetes. We have global recognition from the world's governments that NCDs are a global pandemic requiring urgent, high-level action, and an appropriate platform for taking this action. Diabetes is firmly on the map.

But a huge job remains ahead of us in translating this opportunity into real change for people with diabetes and those at risk. Next year is the



90th anniversary of the discovery of insulin — yet children and adults throughout the world are dying every day from lack of insulin and other diabetes supplies.

This need not be the case. We have cost-effective solutions and we know what to do. But although diabetes and NCDs form 60% of the burden of disease in low- and middle-income countries, they receive less than 1% of international aid funding for health. This has to change. The International Diabetes Federation will take this message to the NCD Summit.

Another message is that we want diabetes and the other NCDs to be integrated into existing health systems. We see this as a driver for an overall strengthening of health systems, which will also benefit people with infectious diseases and other conditions. Indeed, we now have the opportunity to build a new model for health systems that focuses on well-being, health literacy, prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment — an opportunity that



was generally lost in the global response to HIV/AIDS. We CAN and MUST get it right this time.

IDF is 60 years old this year and we are proud of what our network has achieved. We are proud that the first page of the UN Resolution for the NCD Summit notes the 2006 UN Resolution on Diabetes — which, by recognizing diabetes as a chronic, debilitating, and costly disease, laid an essential foundation to achieving the Summit. We are proud of the work of our 220 member associations over the last year in lobbying their governments for the NCD Summit.

In many countries, we have seen IDF national members join forces with their national cancer and cardiovascular disease counterparts to further strengthen their advocacy efforts. Ministers and civil servants take note when they receive a letter or a delegation from different organisations working together — we know that a letter written by the diabetes, cancer and heart



associations in the United States supporting the NCD Summit reached the desk of President Obama.

Going forward, we will harness IDF's people-power via consultations to establish our members' priorities for the Summit and work with them to ensure that governments hear what we have to say as a global diabetes movement.

We are working to prepare an NCD Summit that will deliver clear, measurable outcomes and a clear programme of action that we can work on together. **For those of you who think this NCD summit is happening too early, I ask you this: IF NOT NOW, THEN WHEN??**

We need all of you to work with us on this effort, and ensure that the NCD Summit is not just a talking shop. The millions of people with diabetes and



other chronic diseases around the world deserve no less. They cannot wait.

We must ensure that in 5 years' time, we are able to look back and say that people in every part of the world have better lives because of what we achieved this year and the next.

Let's ensure that people with diabetes the world over have access to insulin....
their oxygen. We are united for diabetes and NCDs. We're in this battle together.

Thank you.