



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
Social Communication Service
Press Division

**SUGGESTED SPEECH BY MINISTER JOSÉ GOMES TEMPORÃO FOR
VIDEO RECORDING, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE
DIABETES SUMMIT FOR LATIN AMERICA IN BRAZIL 2010**

Good evening, friends, colleagues, health authorities and participants in the Conference on Diabetes for Latin America.

I would very much have liked to be there with you. I have had the opportunity to study the programme for the conference and see not only the diversity of topics to be discussed during the three days of this event, but also the quality of the contributions planned for this meeting.

For us, in Brazil, an in-depth discussion on the situation of diabetes, the implications of this disease and alternatives for prevention, is of special relevance for the health of our country at this moment in time.

It is a crucial debate at a time when Brazil is experiencing a series of transitions, cutting across the whole of Brazilian society and having a huge impact in the health sector.

The first of these transitions is a demographic one. Brazil is doing in 50 years what Europe took 100 years to do. The population is aging rapidly. Infant mortality is falling.

This is reflected in an epidemiological transition. Here, we find the chronic diseases of affluence existing side by side with the problems of underdeveloped countries, on account of the differences and inequities that still live on in Brazilian society.

Moreover, technology and food are also in transition. With changes in the structure of the Brazilian family, the average family's pattern of consumption is changing, with a tendency to eat foods with a greater concentration of sodium, sugar and fat.

This is reflected in the illnesses suffered and modes of death of Brazilian citizens. Our most recent research shows that 40% of the Brazilian population may be considered overweight and 15% obese.

We estimate that in Brazil there are at least 11 million carriers of diabetes, of whom seven-and-a-half million are aware that they have the disease. That is why I keep on stressing the need to change life habits, eat appropriate food and take regular physical exercise.

What we are proposing is to raise a new political awareness with regard to health, ensuring, for example, that citizens understand that prevention and suitable guidance on healthy habits have a direct impact on the quality of life, on the profile of disease and mortality of the population and on the pressure of demands on the health system.

Since 2007, we have been developing the National Health Education Strategy for Diabetes Self-Care, which envisages the formation of a network of tutors and facilitators to disseminate health education.

In the specific case of diabetes, while giving priority to prevention and promotion, we have also invested in treatment.

In Brazil, the Ministry of Health provides the population with free oral medicines for diabetes, NPH and regular insulin, as well as the resources for monitoring blood sugar levels and syringes for administering insulin.

Diabetes patients are cared for in the public system, at levels ranging from basic to highly complex care. It is complicated work, involving sectors such as supervision, training of professionals, research and management.

The challenges are enormous, providing even more justification for the conference beginning today in Salvador. For us it is, without doubt, a source of great satisfaction to welcome specialists from 34 countries during the biggest event on diabetes in Latin America.

This meeting is the next step in a series of important international events in the area of health taking place in Brazil. In late 2009, we hosted the World Health Organization's first Global Forum on Trauma Care and the 36th World Hospital Congress, both in Rio de Janeiro.

And, looking ahead, in December of this year we shall have the first World Congress of Social Security Systems. Brazil has also been chosen to host the first World Congress on Social Determinants of Health, an official event of the World Health Organization, in October 2011.

Not long ago, the city of Rio de Janeiro was chosen to host the 2016 World Congress on Family Health, along with the Olympic Games. All of us, in the health sector, are not going to be short of work and motivation.

I wish you all every success, good work and an excellent conference.

Warm regards to you all.