

#TimeToTackleRHD

Dr Nguyễn Thị Kim Tiến
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Dear Dr Nguyễn Thị Kim Tiến,

I am writing on behalf of [the World Heart Federation](#) and the RHD community to call on [the government of Vietnam](#) to support the proposal of a World Health Assembly Resolution on RHD.

RHD stands for **rheumatic heart disease**, which is a significant health burden in this country. From **01-02 June 2017 Member States of the World Health Organization will discuss RHD** at the 141st WHO Executive Board meeting in Geneva. The government of New Zealand is leading this process, and is supported by several Member States* and the wider RHD community.

It is time to tackle RHD: this preventable disease affects over 33 million people around the world, killing 275,00 each year. RHD affects the world's most vulnerable communities, and particularly targets women, children and adolescents.

There is a significant burden of RHD in [Vietnam](#). While national data on Vietnam's burden is limited, the Global Burden of Disease study estimates that RHD caused up to 2,218 deaths in Vietnam in 2015. RHD is very costly to the region; in 2005, the WHO estimated that RHD cost the whole Asia-Pacific Region 4,125 million DALYs (disability-adjusted life years).¹

We commend Vietnam's inclusion of an ambitious goal to reduce by 5-10% the number of patients with RHD in its 2002-2010 national NCD plan.² We call upon the government of Vietnam to continue providing leadership in this area and support the forthcoming RHD resolution proposal at the WHO Executive Board. Addressing RHD through a global policy Resolution would save time and money as well as many lives around the world.

We offer our full support to the government of [Vietnam](#) in our shared efforts to reduce the burden of RHD. This disease can have a devastating impact on the lives of those it affects, yet is completely preventable through adequate primary care.

Therefore, we urge you, your government and your fellow decision-makers to recognise RHD as a priority. **We respectfully ask that you will support the process to achieve a global Resolution on RHD.** The debate at the WHO Executive Board meeting on 01-02 June 2017 provides an opportunity to champion this issue and mandate WHO to provide further technical support and guidance on RHD to all countries.

We are keen to discuss this important issue further and can be contacted at resolution@rhdaction.org. We offer our full support to your efforts to address RHD and remain at your service.

With best wishes,

Joanna Markbreiter, Policy & Advocacy Manager
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**Member States already strongly supportive of this process include: Australia, Cook Islands, Ethiopia, Fiji, Namibia, New Zealand, South Africa and others.*

¹http://www.wpro.who.int/health_research/documents/dhs_hr_health_in_asia_and_the_pacific_13_chapter_8_priority_noncommunicable_diseases_and_disorders.pdf

²http://www.wpro.who.int/vietnam/topics/chronic_diseases/vietnam_noncommunicable_disease_prevention_and_control_program_2002_2010_implement_review.pdf

This campaign is coordinated by:

