

## WHF Statement on Agenda Item 16.2 – **Noncommunicable Diseases**

WPRO – Brisbane, Australia – 09-13 October 2017

Honourable Chair, distinguished delegates.

The World Heart Federation welcomes the Committee's progress report on non-communicable diseases (or NCDs), and commends the attention given to NCDs on this year's agenda.

It is vital that WPRO Member States continue to prioritise the prevention and control of NCDs: they are the leading cause of death and disability in the region, and are projected to account for 12.3 million deaths by the year 2020.<sup>1</sup>

Of these, cardiovascular diseases (or CVDs) make up the largest proportion, and we draw Member States' attention to the WHO Global HEARTS initiative,<sup>2</sup> a technical package for the management of CVD in primary health care, as a way to address this burden.

For many Member States in the Region, reducing their NCD burden will also mean tackling rheumatic heart disease (or RHD), a preventable disease that affects 33 million people globally.<sup>3</sup>

RHD usually begins in childhood as rheumatic fever, and if not systematically controlled through basic primary care, can progress into irreversible heart valve damage in adolescence, causing devastating morbidity and mortality.

Tackling RHD can, however, be a cost-saving measure. In some WPRO countries, 10% of the total health budget is used on heart surgery for RHD:<sup>4</sup> by pursuing affordable interventions at the primary health care level these costs can be greatly reduced.

We thank WPRO Member States that have already demonstrated leadership on this issue, however much remains to be done. Therefore, to complement ongoing progress by Member States in the region to prevent and control NCDs, including RHD, we make three recommendations:

1. **Implement affordable and cost-effective interventions to address NCDs at the primary health care level**, as outlined in the WHO Global HEARTS technical package.<sup>5</sup>
2. **Develop and sustain programmes for primary and secondary prevention of rheumatic fever and RHD in endemic settings**. These interventions have been identified as cost-effective by the updated Appendix 3.<sup>6</sup>
3. **Support the Draft Resolution on 'Rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease'**. This global policy, which has been recommended for adoption at the World Health Assembly in 2018, will enable Member States to receive technical support to tackle this preventable disease.

Thank you for your attention.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.wpro.who.int/topics/noncommunicable\\_diseases/en/](http://www.wpro.who.int/topics/noncommunicable_diseases/en/)

<sup>2</sup> <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/252661/1/9789241511377-eng.pdf?ua=1>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1603693#t=article>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18181388>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.who.int/cardiovascular\\_diseases/global-hearts/en/](http://www.who.int/cardiovascular_diseases/global-hearts/en/)

<sup>6</sup> [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/EB140/B140\\_27-en.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB140/B140_27-en.pdf?ua=1)