

PRESS RELEASE

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MESSAGE ON WORLD DIABETES DAY

14 November 2009

ISLAMABAD, 13 November 2009 (UN Information Centre) – Welcoming the fact that the International Diabetes Federation has been observing World Diabetes Day globally since 1991, with co-sponsorship of the World Health Organization (WHO), the General Assembly, on 20 December 2006, designated 14 November, the current World Diabetes Day, as a United Nations Day, to be observed every year beginning in 2007 (resolution 61/225). Recognizing that diabetes is a chronic, debilitating and costly disease which poses serious challenges to development, the Assembly encouraged Member States to develop national policies for its prevention, treatment and care in line with the sustainable development of their health-care systems, taking account of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

UN Secretary-General's Message on World Diabetes Day:

“Diabetes kills at least one million people every year, many of them in developing countries and many well before their anticipated life expectancy. It can make other diseases worse, and can have a terrible impact on maternal and child health. In some countries, the rapidly rising burden of diabetes is a factor in faltering progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Yet Type 2 diabetes is preventable. It is among the so-called “lifestyle diseases” – along with cardio-vascular disease and some cancers – attributable to unhealthy diets, a lack of exercise, tobacco use and the abuse of alcohol play.

This means that effective strategies and plans of action will not be limited to the health sector alone. Rather, they should involve many areas of government and a wide range of actors, including civil society and the private sector.

The UN system, for its part, is fully engaged in helping countries to deal with the challenges posed by diabetes. Prevention can help reduce poverty, promote economic productivity and keep countries on track in their efforts to achieve the MDGs.

On World Diabetes Day, I urge the international community and international development agencies to support developing countries in preventing diabetes and increasing access to health care.”
