

***ACCO and the International Confederation of Childhood Cancer Parent Organizations Join Together to Highlight Childhood Cancer at the UN High-level Meeting on Non-Communicable Disease***



On May 13, 2010, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly unanimously passed resolution 64/265 to convene a High-level Meeting to take place September 19th and 20th, 2011 on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). The UN Summit on NCDs to be held at the UN Headquarters in NYC is the second of its kind to focus on a global disease issue. The first UN Summit related to health was the HIV/AIDS meeting in 2001 which led to the creation of the Global Fund. NCD's have become the "AIDS" of this generation.

The NCD Summit will focus on four of the world's most prevalent non-communicable diseases, namely, cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes, with the aim of reaching an agreement on a global strategy to address the burden of NCDs. These four diseases are the main causes of death and disability worldwide, representing about 60% of deaths and 44% of early deaths (36 Million deaths every year, 90% who die younger than age 60 are in developing countries).

Round table discussions of member states will include the following:

- The rising incidence, developmental and other challenges and the social and economic impact of non-communicable diseases and their risk factors.
- Strengthening national capacities, as well as appropriate policies to address prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

- Fostering international cooperation, as well as coordination to address non-communicable diseases.

In preparation for the September High-level meeting, an Informal Hearing on NCDs was held June 16, 2011 at the UN in New York. 350 representatives from civil society organizations, NGOs, NPOs (non-profit organizations), private corporations and academia were in attendance. ACCO's Executive Director Ruth Hoffman, as well as two members of the ICCCPO board, Kenneth Dollman and Edith Grynspancholo attended the session to present a case for childhood cancer. They also distributed a prepared press release on childhood cancer for other delegates in attendance.

At the June hearing, Princess Dina Mired from Jordan, the director of the King Hussein Cancer Foundation in Jordan pointed out that "whether an individual survives or dies from an NCD depends on which country a person is born in." She used her personal story as an example. Twelve years ago, her two year old son was diagnosed with leukemia. Because of the lack of an available facility to treat cancer in her country at that time, she travelled to the USA with her son for treatment. As a result of her passion as a mother of a childhood cancer survivor, the King Hussein Cancer Center now offers top quality cancer care in Jordan, and celebrated 1,000 childhood cancer survivors this year. Princess Mired highlighted that **"a lack of attention to NCDs has made it a "non-communicated" disease"**.



## Childhood Cancer: A Neglected NCD.

Unlike many adult onset NCD's that are directly attributed to lifestyle choices including obesity, lack of exercise, and smoking, childhood cancer cannot be prevented. Cancer selects children indiscriminately regardless of race, ethnicity, economic standing, or lifestyle choices.

Among 5-14 year olds, childhood cancer is the: #2 cause of death in wealthy countries, #3 cause of death in upper-middle income countries, #4 cause of death in lower middle-income countries, and #8 cause of death in low-income countries.

Perhaps more than any other NCD, childhood cancer is a stark reminder of the human cost of global health inequities. In developed countries, where those affected have access to highly developed treatment protocols and well-trained medical staff, 80% of children survive. Children with cancer who live in resource-poor countries have an absence of specialist treatment facilities, a lack of health professionals with expertise in childhood cancer, extremely high cost of medicines and treatment and often late or incorrect diagnosis. Of the small minority of children who are diagnosed correctly, approximately 20% survive. Additionally, despite the glaring global inequalities, childhood cancers in lower and middle-income countries—where 88% of the world’s children live, receive little attention from researchers and health authorities.

## **Why is the NCD Summit Important?**

The UN High-level meeting on NCD’s provides the best opportunity to put NCDs on the global agenda. It has the potential to mobilize and secure commitments from Heads of Government for a coordinated global response to NCDs through prevention programs such as global tobacco control, substantially increase financial resources for NCDs, and save millions of men, women and children from premature death and debilitating health complications. It can lead to measurable goals that can be monitored and measured to keep governments accountable. It also offers an invaluable opportunity to coordinate work towards disease treatment and cures on a global scale.

ACCO and ICCCP will be at the table to emphasize that 3 of the 4 NCD’s when occurring in children – i.e. cancer, pediatric cardiovascular disease, and type 1 diabetes have no intervention possible through an “adult prevention” approach to disease. Most importantly to our families of children with cancer world-wide, this meeting provides us with the opportunity to ensure that the voices of those children with non-preventable cancers are not forgotten. Children must be included in all NCD initiatives derived from the summit—and included not as a matter of charity, but as a matter of justice.

ACCO will continue to update our constituents on the on-going work resulting from this High-level meeting and will be guiding you on how you can engage with elected officials in the USA to encourage them to adopt an Agenda for Action that will be sure to include childhood cancer as an important NCD.

## **For Further Information on NCD’s:**

### **[NCD Alliance](#)**

#### Key Documents:

- NCD Alliance Briefing Paper on Children and NCD
- Don’t Forget the Children : A Focus on Children and NCDs
- WHO Global Status Report on NCD
- UN Secretary Generals Report on NCDs
- Africa’s Neglected Epidemic
- Moscow Ministerial Conference Declaration
- Jakarta Declaration;
- Korea Declaration
- Web casts of UN Informal Interactive Sessions

### **[International Union Against Cancer](#)**

#### Key Documents:

- UICC UN Summit on NCDs Cancer Outcomes Statement
- Time to Act: The Global Emergency of Non Communicable Diseases

### **[World Health Organization](#)**

#### Key Documents:

- WHO Global Health Strategy for the Prevention and Control of NCD
- WHO ACTION PLAN FOR NCDs
- WHO 2008-2013 Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Disease