**SKYMUN 2014 Chair Research Report**

**Committee:** General Assembly II

**Issue**: Measures to prevent and combat non-communicable diseases

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1. Description of Issue

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are one of the leading causes of deaths in all regions of the world. NCDs kill more than 36 million people each year. According to World Health Organization (WHO), in 2008 63% of the global deaths were caused by non-communicable diseases and predicted the number of global deaths would increase each year for the next 10 years. They are most commonly referred to as chronic diseases, or illnesses. These diseases are not contagious but are diseases that are developed through a long period of time. The four main types of non-communicable diseases are cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes.

The duration of the illness can differ. Some more common NCDs are asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), respiratory allergies, occupational lung diseases and pulmonary hypertension. These diseases are due to sedentary lifestyle and directly linked to lifestyle and environment factors, including lack of exercise, consuming unhealthy food, smoking, and etc. As non-communicable diseases are affected by different risk factors, the WHO identified five important risk factors to health. These are raised blood pressure, raised cholesterol, tobacco use, alcohol consumption, and overweight. Some other factors are associated with person’s economic and social conditions, known as the “social determinants of health”. NCDs can also be affected by one’s environment, caused by external factors such as sunlight, nutrition, and lifestyle choices. Most NCDs are considered preventable because they are caused by modifiable risk factors. However some non-communicable diseases can be affected by race and hereditary traits.

Non-communicable diseases generally affect both low-and middle-income countries. It is known approximately 80% of NCD deaths (29 million) are held by these countries. Most people associate NCDs with elders, over million of these deaths occur before the age of 60, also known as “premature” deaths, and 90% occur in these countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) predicts the greatest increase in NCDs to be is in the African region (27%) and in the Eastern Mediterranean region (25%), while the absolute death numbers will peak in the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia. NCDs are also known to lead to a weak economy, as seen below, and are indirect results of globalization. Since they hinder economic development prospects, stem from and at the same time reinforce globalization but also are, as mentioned before, the leading cause of death globally and a major obstacle in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, they constitute an issue that must be addressed promptly and efficiently.

The issue of non-communicable diseases threatens to impede the UN Millennium Goals as poverty and NCDs are closely tied together. The great increase in NCDs due to various factors and lack of resources must be combatted.

2. Definition of Key Terms

**Non-communicable disease(NCD):** a medical condition or illness which is not contagious and not caused by an infection. They include injuries, cardiovascular diseases, cancers, respiratory diseases, digestive diseases and also neuropsychiatric disorders. The duration of the illness can differ.

**Risk Factors:** Risk factors like a person’s background, lifestyle & environment to the probability of non-communicable diseases; for example, age, sex, genetics, exposure to pollution, smoking, unhealthy diet, & physical inactivity.

**Chronic diseases:** Chronic diseases are diseases of long duration and slow progression; for example, heart disease, stroke, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes.

3. Timeline of Key Events

**2000:** Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases

**2000:** World Heart Day established

**2000:** UN Millennium Summit

**2003:** WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

**2004:** Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity, and Health

**2006:** UN established World Diabetes Day

**2006:** UN Resolution on Diabetes

**2008:** World Cancer Declaration and establishment of World Cancer Day

**2011:** United Nations General Assembly Non-communicable Disease (NCD) Summit

4. Relative Treaties and UN Solutions

**Resolution WHA60/15** on Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases:implementation of the global strategy

**Resolution WHA61/4** on Strategies to reduce the harmful use of alcohol

**The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**: provide the foundation for countries to implement and manage tobacco control

**Non-communicable Disease (NCD) Summit** was the first time the General Assembly gathered to prevent NCDs. It was the second time they had been gathered for a health issue. The first time had been for AIDs/HIVs. This summit was acknowledged by four NGO’s that represented the four groups of NCDs. They were the World Heart Federation, International Diabetes Federation (IDF), International Union Against Cancer (UICC), and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union). The two-day meeting agreed for a new campaign to be established that would target the four groups of NCDs- cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes. Various methods such as, extensive marketing (especially toward children), tax measures for tobacco, and education for preventing NCDs were discussed. Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon acknowledged that all members must play their part in solving this problem while addressing different kinds of industry giants.

**2008-2013 Action plan of the global strategy for the prevention and control of Non-communicable Disease** is an action plan created by WHO. It responds to how each country should carry out various actions to prevent non-communicable diseases. They stated that in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the Global strategy on diet, physical activity and health and the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol would target tobacco, health, and alcohol problems.

**UN Millennium Goals** is a detailed blue print of how the 191 UN member states have agreed to act to reach 8 goals by 2015. The goals include halving world poverty, halting the spread of HIV/AIDs, universally providing primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality rates and etc. NCDs are directly related to poverty and health. The amount of money that is needed for NCD treatments push low-middle-income families into deeper poverty. Thus, this takes us a step further from reaching these goals. To reach these goals, NCDs must be taken into care in the millennium goals.

5. Positions of Major Countries and Organizations Involved

**The World Health Organization (WHO**) is a specialized agency within the UN that is responsible for international public health including NCDs. It was established on 7 April 1948, with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. In May 2008, the 193 Member States of the WHO approved a six-year plan to address non-communicable diseases, especially the rapidly increasing burden in low- and middle-income countries.

**NCD Alliance** was formed by four international NGOs committed to the main non-communicable diseases (diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases).Along with other major international NGO partners, the NCD Alliance unites a network of over 2,000 civil society organizations in more than 170 countries. The mission of the NCD Alliance is to combat the NCD epidemic by establishing health as the top priority of states.

**NCDnet** is an initiative started by WHO. It is in the direct support of the Objective 5 of the NCD Action Plan that specifically calls upon Member States, WHO, and international partners and other stakeholders to promote partnerships for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

**World Heart Federation** works to build global commitment to address cardiovascular health issues, generate and exchange ideas, and to advance scientific knowledge.

**International Diabetes Federation (IDF)** is an umbrella organization of over 200 member associations in more than 160 countries. The mission is to promote diabetes care, prevention, and a cure.

**About the International Union Against Cancer (UICC)** unites 36- member organizations in over 100 countries in the global fight against cancer.

**International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)** attempts to generate solution and support to health challenges, and focus on research of tuberculosis, HIV, lung health, and non-communicable diseases, tobacco control.

**World Heart Federation** is a global NGO that has been fighting heart disease and stroke. Its focus is set on low and middle-income families and is the only global NGO that is leading the fight against heart disease and stroke The World Heart Federation is united with over 200 member organization that come together to help over 100 countries all over the world.

**International Diabetes Federation (IDF)** is a global umbrella organization that is partners with over 200 diabetes associations and over 160 countries. This organization mission is to provide diabetes education, raise awareness, influence policies and promote health. IDF is divided into 7 departments according to region of Africa (AFR),Europe (EUR),Middle East and North Africa (MENA), North America and Caribbean (NAC),South and Central America (SACA), South East Asia (SEA) and Western Pacific (WP). In 2006 a United Nations resolution for diabetes was secured by Unite for Diabetes campaign and IDF. The Resolution encourages UN Member States to develop national policies for the prevention, treatment and care of diabetes in line with the sustainable development of their health-care systems, taking into account the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals”

**International Union Against Cancer (UICC)** is the only global NGO that is solely dedicated to fighting against cancer. UICC has brought together over 280 organizations and 90 countries in various fields to fight cancer. It’s mission is to educate people about cancer, sharing and transferring scientific findings, “systematically reducing and eventually eliminating disparities in prevention, early detection, treatment and care of cancers…” and providing the best cancer treatment for cancer patients. UICC is trying to reach its goals through cancer prevention and control, tobacco control, and capacity building and supportive care.

**International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)** founded in 1920, is a NGO that is founded upon the mission to prevent and control tuberculosis and lung disease. With headquarters all around the world, The Union specially targets low and middle-income families. This NGO is most widely known for researching the global strategy for treating and controlling tuberculosis partnered with WHO. It is know a part of a strategy called, Stop TB Strategy that has been used to help over 37 million people.

**Africa-** Non-communicable diseases are the number one death factor in the world except Africa. In 10 years it has been predicted Africa will have the highest rate of non-communicable disease caused death. This rate would surpass the rate of all other killing factors.

6. Suggested Solutions

There is much being done by WHO and the United Nations that help by taking care of poverty stricken families, giving aid to the sick, providing shelter and necessities and much more. However, after the NCD Summit in 2011, there has not been much done that directly targets NCDs. It is the job of the General Assembly II to change this situation. First, NCDs are mainly caused by unhealthy habits such as tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and alcohol. Changing and improving habits and encouraging physical activity are some of the easier ways NCDs can be prevented. Furthermore, placing taxes and regulation on tobacco and alcohol would prevent users from over excessively using it.

Therefore, tobacco control should be widely encouraged. There are all sorts of methods this could take place such as offering help to people who want to quit smoking, spreading awareness about the dangers of tobacco use at schools and workplaces, creating guidelines for tobacco advertising and promotion.

Second, we must seek ways to better healthcare for low and middle-income families. High-income countries have better healthcare that provides and help families pay for treatments NCD patients need. However, health care for low and middle-income families is often times insufficient to cover the expenses. Check ups to find and treat NCDs at an early stage should be encouraged for everyone because this would not only lower treatment expenses but would be prevent the disease from growing.

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