

A Call for Action was adopted today by the participants of the First WHO Ministerial Conference on Global Action Against Dementia

Geneva – March 17, 2015

The participants included 80 Member States, 80 philanthropic foundations, 45 NGOs and 4 UN Agencies

We, the participants of this Conference, note the following:

1. Dementia currently affects more than 47 million people worldwide, with more than 75 million people estimated to be living with dementia by 2030. The number is expected to triple by 2050. It is one of the major health challenges for our generation. Often hidden, misunderstood and underreported, dementia impacts individuals, families and communities and is a growing cause of disability.
2. Contrary to popular belief, dementia is not a natural or inevitable consequence of ageing. It is a condition that impairs the cognitive brain functions of memory, language, perception and thought and which interferes significantly with the ability to maintain the activities of daily living. The most common types of dementia are Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. Evidence suggests that the risk of certain types of dementia may be lowered by reducing cardiovascular risk factors, as applicable.
3. The personal, social and economic consequences of dementia are enormous. Dementia leads to increased long-term care costs for governments, communities, families and individuals, and to productivity loss for economies. The global cost of dementia care in 2010 was estimated to be US\$ 604 billion – 1.0% of global gross domestic product. By 2030, the cost of caring for people with dementia worldwide could be an estimated US\$ 1.2 trillion or more, which could undermine social and economic development throughout the world.
4. Nearly 60% of people with dementia live in low- and middle-income countries, and this proportion is expected to increase rapidly during the next decade, which may contribute to increasing inequalities between countries and populations.
5. A sustained global effort is thus required to promote action on dementia and address the challenges posed by dementia and its impacts. No single country, sector or organization can tackle this alone.
6. The following overarching principles and approaches are integral to global efforts:
 - Empowering and engaging the full and active participation of people living with dementia, their caregivers and families, as well as overcoming stigma and discrimination;

- Fostering collaboration between all stakeholders to improve prevention and care, and to stimulate research;
- Incorporating the aspects of dementia prevention, care and rehabilitation in policies related to ageing, disability and noncommunicable diseases, including mental health;
- Building on and utilising existing expertise, collaborative arrangements and mechanisms to maximise impact;
- Balancing prevention, risk reduction, care and cure so that whilst efforts are directed towards finding effective treatments and practices and risk reduction interventions, continuous improvements are made on care for people living with dementia and support for their caregivers;
- Advocating for an evidence-based approach and shared learning, allowing advances in open research and data sharing to be available to facilitate faster learning and action;
- Emphasising that policies, plans, programmes, interventions and actions are sensitive to the needs, expectations and human rights of people living with dementia and their caregivers;
- Embracing the importance of universal health coverage and an equity-based approach in all aspects of dementia efforts, including facilitation of equitable access to health and social care for people living with dementia and their caregivers.

We, the participants of this Conference, call for the following actions for people living with dementia, their caregivers, families and community:

- Raising the priority accorded to global efforts for dementia on the agendas of relevant high-level forums and meetings of national and international leaders;
- Strengthening capacity, leadership, governance, multisectoral action and partnerships to accelerate responses to address dementia;
- Promoting a better understanding of dementia, raising public awareness and engagement, including the respect for their human rights, reducing stigma and discrimination, and fostering greater participation, social inclusion and integration of people living with dementia;
- Advancing prevention, risk reduction, diagnosis and treatment of dementia, consistent with current and emerging evidence;
- Facilitating technological and social innovations to meet the needs of people living with dementia and their caregivers;
- Increasing collective efforts in dementia research and fostering collaboration;
- Facilitating the coordinated delivery of health and social care for people living with dementia, including capacity building of the workforce, supporting mutual care taking across generations on an individual, family and society level, and strengthening support and services for their caregivers and families;
- Supporting a gender-sensitive approach in the elaboration of plans, policies and interventions aimed at improving the lives of people living with dementia;

- Promoting further work in identifying and addressing barriers to dementia care, particularly in low-resource settings;
- Strengthening international efforts to support plans and policies at all levels for people living with dementia, in particular in low- and middle-income countries;
- Supporting the efforts of the World Health Organization, within its mandate and work plans, to fulfil its leadership role in full collaboration with national and international partners, to promote and monitor global efforts on dementia.

SOURCE: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2015/action-on-dementia/en/>