



press release

News embargo until June 10, 2006

Wake-up call to halt global diabetes epidemic

International Diabetes Federation launches 'Unite for Diabetes' campaign to win government support for UN Resolution

Brussels/Washington D.C., June 10, 2006 – The 'Unite for Diabetes' campaign was launched by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) in Washington today. The campaign aims to highlight the alarming rise of diabetes worldwide and to encourage government support for a United Nations Resolution on diabetes. IDF is leading the global diabetes community in a concerted effort to secure the Resolution on or around World Diabetes Day (November 14) 2007.

New data from the International Diabetes Federation show that more than 230 million people, almost 6% of the world's adult population, now live with diabetes. Previous figures underestimated the diabetes threat and the total is expected to rise.

The number of people living with diabetes is expected to grow to 350 million in less than 20 years if action is not taken. Diabetes is increasing faster in the world's developing economies than in developed countries. Seven out of ten countries with the highest number of people living with diabetes are in the developing world. IDF predicts that by 2025 almost 80% of all diabetes cases will be in low- and middle-income countries. If nothing is done, diabetes will place severe economic, social and health burdens on the countries that can least afford it. The disease threatens to subvert the gains of economic advancement.

"Diabetes is one of the biggest health catastrophes the world has ever seen. The diabetes epidemic will overwhelm healthcare resources everywhere if governments do not wake up and take action now," said Professor Martin Silink, President-Elect of IDF.

Despite its alarming human toll, claiming as many lives as HIV/AIDS, there is an extraordinary lack of awareness of the global scale of the diabetes threat. The 'Unite for Diabetes' campaign aims to gain support from governments for a United Nations Resolution on diabetes in order to raise awareness of the disease and improve diabetes care globally.

Diabetes is one of the major causes of premature death worldwide. Every 10 seconds a person dies from diabetes-related causes. The death rates are predicted to rise by 25% over the next decade. According to the World Health Organization, the disease could reduce life expectancy globally for the first time in 200 years.





press release

News embargo until June 10, 2006

Despite these alarming figures, little political effort has been made. "The international community needs to start taking the threat seriously. We must join forces in our fight against diabetes, otherwise we will jeopardize the health and lives of millions," demanded Professor Pierre Lefèbvre, President of IDF. "Diabetes can be effectively managed, its impact reduced and its onset in many cases prevented completely," he added. Some 80% of type 2 diabetes is preventable by improving the living environment. This includes dietary changes and increased physical activity. Type 1 diabetes (insulin dependent) however is not preventable. It predominantly affects youth and is rising alarmingly worldwide at a rate of 3% per year.

Reversing the current trend is not just a health issue. It will require a whole-of-government approach and the attention of the international community. A United Nations Resolution on diabetes will recognize the global burden of diabetes and focus world attention on the need for immediate action. IDF hopes that a UN Resolution on diabetes will prompt decision-makers to take preventive actions against the growing health challenge.

New global diabetes data are taken from the Diabetes Atlas third Edition, International Diabetes Federation 2006 (in press).

Note for editors:

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) is the global advocate for more than 230 million people with diabetes worldwide. It represents over 190 Diabetes Associations in more than 150 countries. The mission of IDF is to promote diabetes care, prevention and a cure worldwide. IDF is a non-governmental organisation in official relations with the 'World Health Organization'.

For further information, please contact:

International Diabetes Federation
Avenue Emile De Mot 19
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32-2-5385511 Fax: +32-2-5385114
E-mail: communications@idf.org



unite for diabetes