



### Civil Society Hearing Statement

As members of the World Heart Federation and the NCD Alliance, the American Heart Association is the United States' oldest, largest voluntary organization devoted to fighting cardiovascular diseases and stroke. We fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies and provide lifesaving tools and information to save and improve lives. Our mission is to build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

Cardiovascular disease (heart attacks and strokes) is responsible for nearly half of global deaths from NCDs. Despite the burden of disease however CVD is not adequately reflected in national health and chronic disease plans. We remain concerned that the Global Monitoring Framework (GMF) targets are still not adequately prioritized nor resourced. We cannot stress enough the urgency to ensure the GMF is incorporated into national plans and we look forward to hearing what you think needs to be done to accelerate action.

The Association joins the global cardiovascular community in helping to implement the WHO Global Action Plan and other priorities set out in the Political Declaration. As an organization who has committed itself to driving mortality rates down in our own nation we see opportunities to share our over 80 years of experience to support Member States efforts. We commit to bringing our technical experience, evidence and best practice guidelines in support of the WHO GAP and most importantly ensure that these efforts are closely connected to patients and the public. We have some ideas of our own, but let us know how we can work with you.

Globally robust data is still unavailable on the prevalence of risk factors and the burden of CVD. Respecting the need for data to measure our progress, we support rapid implementation of the WHO Framework for NCD Surveillance covering i) monitoring of risk factors and determinants ii) outcomes, and iii) health system response, as well as to integrate NCDs into the national health system response.

Moreover, in all regions of the world there are significant inequalities in the burden of CVD and access to care. We call for a renewed commitment to reducing these health inequalities and to ensure access to quality health care for all. We know successful prevention and treatment of CVD requires strong primary, secondary and tertiary care. Recognizing effective prevention and early diagnosis will significantly reduce the burden of CVD, we must not neglect the need to ensure access to acute care is available for those who need it and without financial risk. We would like to see comprehensive CVD care is at the heart of universal health coverage and other mechanisms to deliver healthcare.

We especially want to call out tobacco as the only risk factor common to the four major NCD categories and reiterate the need to accelerate the implementation of the Framework Convention

on Tobacco Control, including substantially increasing tobacco taxes and establishing national tobacco tax targets.

We call for a whole of government approach that ensures heart health is central to policy making across government departments, whether they are related to energy, transportation, education, trade and so on. All stakeholders, but in particular governments have a responsibility to ensure people have the best opportunities to make heart-healthy choices where they live, work and play.

With respect to the development agenda and to realize our shared mission of a healthier world, NCDs and CVD must continue to be recognized at the highest political level and not be seen as just a health issue, therefore we urge that NCDs are discussed at future general assemblies and call for a comprehensive UN High-Level Review on NCDs in 2017, and every four years thereafter.

In closing, we thank you for considering our statement and we look forward to working with you towards a successful UN NCD Review in July.