THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC DISEASE IN THE AMERICAS

Chronic diseases are the major cause of death and disability worldwide

Facts:
- In the WHO Region of the Americas, chronic diseases are projected to account for 78% of all deaths (see below).
  - Total projected deaths in WHO Region of the Americas, 2005 = 6,225,000.
  - Total projected deaths due to chronic disease in WHO Region of the Americas, 2005 = 4,823,000.

WHO projects that over the next 10 years in the WHO Region of the Americas:
- 53 million people will die from a chronic disease.
- Deaths from infectious diseases, maternal and perinatal conditions, and nutritional deficiencies combined will decrease by 8%.
- Deaths from chronic diseases will increase by 17% - most markedly, deaths from diabetes will increase by over 80%.

Note:
The data presented in this information sheet were estimated by WHO using standard methods to maximize cross-country comparability. They are not necessarily the official statistics of WHO Member States.

Projected deaths by cause, all ages, WHO Region of the Americas, 2005

- Cardiovascular disease: 33%
- Chronic respiratory disease: 7%
- Cancer: 19%
- Other chronic diseases: 14%
- Diabetes: 5%
- Communicable, maternal and perinatal, nutritional deficiencies: 13%
- Injuries: 9%
Projected prevalence of overweight, WHO Region of the Americas, males and females aged 30 years or more, 2005 and 2015

**Facts:**
- Raised body mass index (overweight and obesity) is an important cause of chronic disease.
- Prevalence of overweight in the WHO Region of the Americas is expected to increase in both men and women over the next 10 years (see charts, left).

**Solutions:**
- At least 80% of premature heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, and 40% of cancer could be prevented through healthy diet, regular physical activity and avoidance of tobacco products.
- Cost-effective interventions exist, and have worked in many countries: the most successful strategies have employed a range of population-wide approaches combined with interventions for individuals.
- WHO estimates that in the Region of the Americas, a 2% annual reduction in chronic disease death rates over and above existing trends during the next 10 years would save almost 5 million lives; over 2 million of these lives saved would be in people under age 70.