THE IMPACT OF CHRONIC DISEASE IN LOW INCOME COUNTRIES

Chronic diseases are the major cause of death and disability worldwide

Facts:
- In low income countries, chronic diseases are projected to account for 43% of all deaths (see below).
  - Total projected deaths in low income countries, 2005 = 28,807,000.
  - Total projected deaths due to chronic disease in low income countries, 2005 = 12,314,000.

WHO projects that over the next 10 years in low income countries:
- 137 million people will die from a chronic disease.
- Deaths from infectious diseases, maternal and perinatal conditions, and nutritional deficiencies combined will decrease by 4%.
- Deaths from chronic diseases will increase by 20% - most markedly, deaths from diabetes will increase by 39%.

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, low income countries, 2005

- Cardiovascular disease: 23%
- Communicable, maternal and perinatal, nutritional deficiencies: 48%
- Chronic respiratory disease: 5%
- Cancer: 7%
- Diabetes: 1%
- Other chronic diseases: 7%
- Injuries: 9%
Projected prevalence of overweight, low income countries, 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 low income countries 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 low income countries, a 2% annual reduction in chronic disease death rates over and above existing trends during the next 10 years would save almost 13 million lives; over 7 million of these lives saved would be in people under age 70.