Statement by: World Stroke Organization

President’s Statement for UN High Level Meeting on Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, 27th September 2018

My name is Werner Hacke, a Neurologist from Germany and I speak here as the President of the World Stroke Organization.

Every year, almost 15 million human beings die of stroke and many more survive with a lifelong burden of physical, cognitive, mental, and socio-economic impairment. This cruel tragedy leaves families desperate and could be avoided. Stroke is both preventable and treatable.

Stroke shares the same risk factors as cardiac diseases and other NCDs such as smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, lack of exercise, alcohol abuse and unhealthy foods.

These facts have been well known for decades and the solutions are obvious and cost effective, but actions are slow and reluctant.

Any further delay caused by lack of political will and weak compromises, will result in a massive increase of patients suffering and dying from stroke and other NCDs, especially in poor societies. We have had enough futile discussions about facts that no one can seriously deny.

For many scientists and NGOs, the proposed outcome document may look repetitive, timid and not like a big break through- but at least it’s a signal.

It’s time to act now and take quick and clear decisions. Otherwise unnecessary premature deaths and suffering will grow dramatically, and the responsibility for this unfortunate development will rest with us.

Therefore, the WSO will support all member states in their efforts to improve prevention, get rid of dangerous lifestyles, provide access to medical services, broaden health coverage and access to essential drugs, not only for stroke.

WSO President
Prof. Werner Hacke