My name is Darcy Allen and I am with Women Deliver, a global advocacy organization that works to advance gender equality and the health, rights and wellbeing of girls and women around the world.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide inputs for today’s interactive hearing.

First, I wish to stress the particular burden the NCD epidemic places on girls and women around the world, especially in low and middle income countries. NCDs are responsible for two of every three deaths among women each year. Persistent inequalities mean that girls and women are often at higher risk for NCDs and do not receive timely, quality services to prevent, manage, and treat NCDs.

We strongly believe that the High-level meeting, and accompanying outcome document, must pay specific attention to the needs girls and of women and girls—or we risk a global commitment to combatting NCDs that is incomplete, threaten to undo fragile gains made in girls’ and women’s health and risk failing to fulfill the entirety of our commitments under SDG 3.

Many of the challenges related to girls, women, and NCDs manifest in diabetes in pregnancy—and I also wish to call attention to this critical issue. Diabetes is one of the most common conditions seen in pregnancy and affects 1 in 7 births. More than 200 million women are living with diabetes, and this is projected to increase to 313 million by 2040. Diabetes in pregnancy is preventable and treatable, but left unaddressed, it increases a woman’s risk of life threatening complications from pregnancy—like hemorrhage and hypertension. There are also serious risks for the health of newborns and an increased prevalence of diabetes and obesity in children.

This is an overlooked issue that must be addressed—to save lives, improve maternal health, and curb intergenerational transmission of NCDs.

To this end, Women Deliver and partners are spearheading a Call to Action on Diabetes in Pregnancy, to bring attention to this issue in conjunction with the High-level meeting, and we invite stakeholders here today to join us in the call. Thank you for your attention.