Honourable Chair, distinguished delegates,

The World Heart Federation applauds all governments that have made NCDs a priority in their country and that support the WHO best buys. We would like to encourage countries that have not done so to follow suit and to take NCDs as a top political priority.

Today, 1.4 billion people live with high blood pressure. This is unacceptable and something can and must be done about it.

1. First, we urge Heads of State, Ministers of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Development and Health to attend the High-level Meeting on 27th September to commit to better health and improved economic development in their countries. Indeed, investing in interventions to tackle NCDs, such as cardiovascular diseases, should be considered as a matter of priority and accountability. Every minister is a health minister.

We further call on political leaders to commit to action in 2 key areas that can have an immediate and long-lasting impact to reduce CVD risk throughout the life course:

2. Make access to screening and essential medicines available in all countries so that people who live with NCDs including those who have hypertension and are at high risk of heart attack and stroke don’t end up dying unnecessarily.

3. Introduce or increase taxes on unhealthy commodities such as tobacco products, alcohol and sugar-sweetened beverages to ensure that these products are less affordable. Let us remind all government present that taxing unhealthy commodities does not cost any money and that it is a win-win for governments because such measures prevent the uptake of unhealthy products by young people, and that they also raise government’s revenues.

Governments of low and middle-income countries should also consider earmarking resources raised from these taxes to invest in Universal Health Coverage.

Thank you for your attention.