

MAINSTREAMING CANCER IN THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA



A MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATION
FIGHTING CANCER TOGETHER

Cancer is not just a health matter. It has wide-reaching social, economic and human rights implications, and is a significant barrier to achieving inclusive and equitable development.

Inequality is deepening – social and environmental factors and the double disease burden of exposures in many low- and middle- income countries (LMICs) are keeping the bottom billion locked in chronic poverty and threatening national economies. Broadening the future internationally-agreed development goals to include proven economically-sound interventions that span the entire cancer control and care continuum can strengthen health systems and increase capacity to respond to all of the challenges to sustainable development.

Positioning cancer in the post-2015 global health and development agenda

For the first time, all Member States of the United Nations have agreed that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) constitute a major challenge to socioeconomic development, environmental sustainability and poverty alleviation. The UN Political Declaration in 2011 committed governments to strengthen and integrate NCD policies and programmes into health planning processes and national development agendas (2).

Further to this Declaration, in June 2012, the Rio+20 declaration on Sustainable Development acknowledged that the global burden of NCDs constitutes one of today's major challenges for development (3); and in 2013, the World Health Organization (WHO) adopted the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases 2013-2020, which declared that the **prevention of NCDs including cancer is a precondition for, an outcome of and an indicator of all three dimensions of sustainable development: economic development, environmental sustainability and social inclusion** (4).

As the conversation on the 2015 development agenda gains momentum, it is an imperative that cancer and other NCDs are mainstreamed within development cooperation initiatives,

Approximately **47% of cancer cases and 55% of cancer deaths occur in less developed regions** i.e. countries at a low or medium level of the human development index (hdi).

By 2030, medium- and low- level hdi countries will bear the brunt of the estimated 21.4 Million new cancer cases per year, with 60-70% of the global cancer burden predicted to occur in developing countries (1).

internationally-agreed development goals, economic development policies, sustainable development frameworks and poverty-reduction strategies.

Cancer within the dimensions of sustainable development

Cancer constitutes a major challenge to the three pillars of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental – across the world.

SOCIAL EQUITY

EVIDENCE

Poverty alleviation and cancer control are interlinked with cancer both as a cause and an outcome of poverty. The impact on productivity and family income and the high treatment costs of cancer impoverish families. At the same time, poverty, lack of access to education and health care expose populations to additional risks for presenting with and dying from many cancers. The impact on gender equality and women's empowerment is largely ignored – breast and cervical cancers alone account for over 750,000 deaths each year - almost the same number of deaths among women of reproductive age in LMICs as maternal mortality (5). Existing gender biases in power, resources, culture and a lack of investment in cancer



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interventions at the primary health care level restrict women in LMICs from accessing essential cancer services, including education on cancer prevention and early detection programs. Additionally, more than 70% of the world's children with cancer lack access to treatment. The result is an unacceptably low survival rate of ~10% in some LMICs compared to ~90% in some high-income countries.

GLOBAL ADVOCACY MESSAGE

All people have the right to access proven effective cancer treatment and services on equal terms, and without suffering economic hardship as a consequence. Cancer prevention efforts including access to information and education about cancer at the primary health care level, early detection programs and affordable, quality medicines, vaccines and technologies, will reduce cancer deaths and disability.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

EVIDENCE

The staggering risk that cancer poses to economic growth and development is still not recognised despite the fact that we know that this risk can be managed effectively and that a return on investment in health is possible. The cost of cancer is estimated to reach \$458 billion in 2030 (6), yet the World Health Organization estimates that a basic package of cost effective strategies to address the common cancer risk factors (tobacco, alcohol, diet and physical activity) would cost only \$2 billion a year (7). Less than 3% (USD 503 million out of USD 22 billion) of overall development assistance for health (DAH) was allocated to NCDs in 2007 and only 5% of global spending on cancer is in the developing world (8). This is despite nearly 80% of the preventable deaths from these diseases occurring in developing countries, with this percentage set to rise.

GLOBAL ADVOCACY MESSAGE

Investing in prevention and early detection of cancer is cheaper than dealing with the consequences. A diagonal approach that focuses on the integration of health services, including integrating cancer prevention and management into primary health care will tackle cancer-specific priorities while addressing the gaps within the health system, optimising the use of resources and increasing capacity to respond to many diseases and population groups.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

EVIDENCE

Challenges to sustainable development such as rapid urbanisation, climate change and shifting agricultural and resource use patterns impact nutritional security, and are linked with greater exposure to cancer risk factors including smoking, poor diet and low physical activity. Additionally, a wide range of environmental causes of cancer, encompassing environmental contaminants or pollutants in air and water, occupation-related exposures such as asbestos, radiation and excessive sunlight, together make a significant contribution to the cancer burden.

GLOBAL ADVOCACY MESSAGE

A whole-of-government approach that promotes multisectoral action and partnerships including with the private sector is essential to develop and implement evidence-based policies, legislation and programmes that reduce the level of exposure to risk factors for cancer and strengthen the capacity of individuals to adopt healthy lifestyle choices.



UICC unites the cancer community to reduce the global cancer burden, to promote greater equity, and to integrate cancer control into the world health and development agenda. UICC will continue to work in close partnership with its members numbering over 800 organisations across 154 countries, key international UN agencies, foundations and corporations to advocate for the inclusion of evidence-based, resource appropriate interventions for cancer control and care within the post-2015 development agenda.

www.uicc.org

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