



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY DR. EDUARDO BUSTOS VILLAR, SECRETARY OF DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND HEALTH RELATIONS, MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF ARGENTINA, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (New York, 20 September 2011)**

Honourable Heads of State and Government,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Mr Secretary General of the United Nations,  
Mr President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,  
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

- 1- I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Firstly, I would like to express that the G77 and China welcomes the convening of this High Level Meeting on Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases. The G77 and China believes that the United Nations, given its universal membership, legitimacy and comprehensive mandate, must play a vital role in mainstreaming NCDs into the global development agenda.
- 2- Non-communicable diseases, mainly cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes represent a real global epidemic and a leading threat to sustainable development and to the right to achieve the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health. These diseases cause the highest number of deaths and disabilities worldwide, accounting for 60% of all deaths, with 80% of them occurring in developing countries. These NCDs could be largely prevented by eliminating shared risk factors, in particular tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol. Other non-communicable diseases such as mental illness and sickle cell also seriously add to the disease burden.
- 3- NCDs deepen social inequities, hinder human development and remain a tough obstacle in the fight against poverty and hunger. Poor living conditions and other social determinants of health contribute to the rising incidence of these diseases. Social inequities, such as an inequitable access to medicines and diagnostic tools and technologies should also be addressed in this regard.
- 4- Medicines are a social good and universal access to them ought to prevail over narrow commercial interests. Ten years ago, the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health confirmed the right of countries to use all safeguards to protect public health and ensure access to treatment. In addressing NCDs, controlling their incidence and mitigating their serious impacts, countries should take all necessary measures to ensure access to affordable, safe, effective and quality medicines, diagnostics and other technologies. We recognize, in that regard, that generic drugs have played a key role in ensuring access to medicines in the developing world. We therefore reaffirm our right to use, to the full, the TRIPS flexibilities, as confirmed by the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health, as well as acknowledge the need to effectively implement the Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health as important tools to help develop national capacities in developing countries in order to strengthen public health and ensure the universal access of the population to medicines and medical technologies without any kind of restriction to specific diseases.

Mr. President,

5- In this globalized world, not only communicable diseases but also NCDs are not constrained by national boundaries. While recognizing the primary role and responsibilities of Governments in responding to this global epidemic, including in the form of awareness raising on the harmful effects of tobacco use and alcohol abuse, as well as the positive effects of good nutrition and physical activity, it should also be recognized that there is an urgent need for joint efforts from all sectors of society as well as from the international community in support of national efforts. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China urges all Member States to strengthen international cooperation, including through the transfer of technology.

6- Despite the importance of NCDs for public health and their growing burden on national health systems, it should be noted that NCDs account for less than 1% of official development assistance for health. The G77 and China calls for the fulfilment of all ODA-related commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for ODA by 2015. NCDs should receive the attention they deserve in the development agenda.

7- The Group urges relevant international organizations and partners to increase technical assistance and capacity building to developing countries, in order to improve NCD prevention and control as well as universal access to medicines, medical and diagnostic technologies, including through the full use of the flexibilities contained in the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and the Doha Declaration on the Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and Public Health, as well as provision of technical assistance for research.

Mr. President,

8- The Political Declaration, to be adopted at the conclusion of this High-level Meeting, is the first comprehensive document with commitments from global leaders to address non-communicable diseases and the Group of 77 and China is of the view that this Declaration serves as a useful platform for on-going consideration of the developmental and other impacts of NCDs.

9- The Group of 77 and China looks forward to engaging with partners and stakeholders in the follow-up process with the aim of strengthening the global response to this epidemic through multi-sectoral actions and effective partnerships.

Thank you.