



ORAL STATEMENT BY IDF EUROPE AT WHO EURO RC66

*“Action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in the WHO European Region”*

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the 60 million Europeans with diabetes and the 70 national associations the International Diabetes Federation European Region represents in 47 countries, I would like to thank WHO EURO for the opportunity to provide this oral statement.

Europe is facing a major yet preventable health, social and economic threat – diabetes – but not enough is being done. Last year 145 billion euro was spent on the direct cost of diabetes alone; indirect costs triple this figure.

If present trends continue, by 2040 Europe will be home to 70 million people with diabetes: 11% of the adult population! Many of them will suffer from amputations or blindness as diabetes is the leading cause of these severe complications. Most of them will die prematurely, mainly because of cardiovascular complications. It is time to rethink our health budgets if they are to cope with this scenario.

The tragedy is that most new cases of diabetes can be prevented- although we well know this is not an easy task: how many in this room signed up at a gym but only went a couple of times? Modifying our eating habits and increasing the level of our physical activity is not that straightforward. Prevention is a long term investment which needs an integrated approach well beyond health policies. We must modify the obesogenic environment we have created by changing the way we build and think our cities, and regulating markets so the healthier option is always the most affordable one.

In the coordinated approach to NCDs, the focus on the individual disease should not be lost. Yes, some risk factors are common, for which a shared prevention strategy makes sense, nevertheless they are different disease entities needing specific strategies and better integration of health systems. For example, people with diabetes are subject to many acute and chronic complications: this burden can be prevented by diabetes education, good metabolic control, early diagnosis and timely treatment of complications such as diabetic eye disease, diabetic renal disease and diabetic foot. The needs of people with diabetes and prediabetes should be urgently considered as several concerns, shared by WHO, still need to be addressed in many countries: they include the access, affordability and availability of medicines, including new drugs, and of medical devices – especially in times of economic crisis. Better collaboration and more transparency are needed at every level and from every stakeholder.

Together with its Members, IDF Europe will continue engaging with WHO EURO and other relevant European institutions to advocate for health in all policies at national and European levels, and to synergize with the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs to reverse the trends of this health, social and economic threat.

Thank you.