



# UN high level summit on NCDs



The United Nations High Level Meeting (HLM) held in New York on 19 September 2011 was a significant meeting of heads of state and government and civil society organisations. As you will be aware from previous reports in preparation for this meeting, the political statement was reviewed further and consensus was reached among member states of the UN by the time of the summit meeting on 19 September. This in itself was some achievement. While there is considerable disappointment among civil society organisations regarding the commitments in the political statement – in particular the absence of an overarching goal and specific targets – it is nonetheless a step forward for non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

In the three round table discussions, the statements read by government representatives recognised the magnitude and impact of the NCD global challenge. There was no opportunity given to discuss possible solutions among those participating in these round tables. It was an opportunity lost and in fact a number of government representatives expressed this disappointment. In my view, the title 'round table discussion' was misleading.

Each government representative was permitted to make a three-minute statement and, because of the large number of statements, this consumed valuable time which might have been spent in a more worthwhile way in discussion regarding solutions but this appears to be the way in which UN 'round tables' are conducted. It was also the experience of FEND representatives at the informal civil society meeting at the UN in June.

Dr Margaret Chan, Director General of WHO, called the meeting a 'watershed event' during her plenary address at the opening of the summit. Many of the government representatives who spoke indicated their awareness of the impact of NCDs in their own countries, and in some cases committed to additional funding and

action plans to specific programmes relating to NCD prevention and control. WHO will be the central agency co-ordinating action post following on from this summit in preparation for a formal report by the end of 2012.

It follows that civil society organisations including FEND should now engage with their national governments because it is there that the responsibility lies. So the work of advocacy must continue. The International Diabetes Federation, as a member of the NCD group, will be addressing the key issues in relation to the deficits in the political declaration as well as ensuring that governments who have made commitments during the UN HLM are held to account.

FEND will engage with WHO through the offices of Dr Ala Alwan, Assistant Director General of WHO with special responsibility for NCDs. FEND aims to offer its expertise in the field of diabetes nursing in addressing this major disease of the NCD group. We will keep you informed with regard to the response of WHO to this offer.

The full political declaration can be viewed in six languages at: [www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/66/L.1](http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/66/L.1). Other documents can be found at: [www.un.org/en/ga/ncdmeeting2011/documents.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/ga/ncdmeeting2011/documents.shtml).

Furthermore, you can also view the webcasts of the plenary and round tables at: [www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/c/ncdmeeting2011.html](http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/c/ncdmeeting2011.html).

FEND was the only nursing organisation represented in the civil society groups.

At the time of writing, World Diabetes Day approaches on 14 November. I wish you all a successful day in promoting awareness of the burden of diabetes in your respective countries, and continued success in your advocacy for people with diabetes.

**Anne-Marie Felton**  
FEND President



## Letters

We would be pleased to receive any comments you may have on articles published in this issue of European Diabetes Nursing or any practice points or ideas you would like to share with readers. We will consider publishing any correspondence in future issues.

Please send your comments to: [EDN@wiley.com](mailto:EDN@wiley.com) or write to The Editor, European Diabetes Nursing, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 8SQ.