FDI calls for oral disease to be integrated in UN NCD list

FDI has called for oral disease to be integrated into the list of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) for priority action within the United Nations and WHO.

Jean-Luc Eiselé, FDI Executive Director told a Civil Society Hearing on NCDs in New York that FDI efforts to encourage international experts to view, in the company of local officials, the impressive facilities at the UN headquarters in New York on 16 June that the current list—which comprises only cancer, diabetes and respiratory and cardiovascular diseases—should be extended.

All oral conditions share common risk factors with the other four major NCDs, including unhealthy diet (particularly high sugar consumption), tobacco, and harmful alcohol use. Oral health professionals should be an integral part of the solution for prevention, early diagnosis and treatment.

Dr Eiselé made the call during a submission on behalf of the United Nations Civil Society Alliance (WHPA) campaign on NCDs, launched in May in advance of the 64th World Health Assembly, warning of the global epidemic of NCDs.

His remarks were echoed later in the day at the panel ‘Non-communicable disease control and prevention’ with an intervention from the floor by Dr Habib Benzian, Director of the NGO ‘Fit for School International’. He reminded panellists that “The most common disease worldwide is dental caries, tooth decay. It has large impact on societies, on children, on each and every one of us… don’t forget oral diseases in the context of NCDs.”

The WHPA submission included recommendations to adopt an holistic approach to NCDs, pay due attention to common risk factors and the social determinants of health; and to recognize and promote investment in the recognition of and investment in the healthcare workforce.

In the submission, Dr Eiselé stressed the key role that health professionals play in reducing the global NCD burden through health promotion, disease prevention, patient care and rehabilitation, adding “The WHPA views access to health care as a human right, whether diseases are communicable or non-communicable, acute or chronic.”

WHPA brings together FDI, the International Council of Nurses (ICN), the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) and the World Medical Association (WMA). Recent Alliance campaigns include a push against counterfeiting of medical products, launched in 2010, which it calls “a serious threat to patient safety and public health worldwide.”

MDA/FDI: President Dr Roberto Vianna salutes expertise of oral health professionals at Malaysia Conference

In a two June addresses, FDI President Dr Roberto Vianna saluted oral health professionals for their expertise, “A key component”, he said, “in community-based health care and prevention strategies.”

“Their role needs to be strengthened and emphasised if meaningful progress is to be achieved in reducing oral disease burdens,” stressed Dr Vianna.

Addressing the assembled dignitaries and guests at the gala dinner, 11 June, of the 68th edition of the Malaysian Dental Association Annual General Meeting and Trade Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur, Dr Vianna complimented the event’s organizers on the breadth of subject areas covered in the scientific programme, delivered by national and international experts.

The FDI President also congratulated the winners of the MDA oral and poster competitions. “I am sure the prize will serve as an encouragement and reinforce your commitment to the art of dentistry and patient care,” he said.

In his address, Dr Vianna described FDI efforts to encourage governments to prioritize and promote oral health and consider it as a citizens’ right. Recognising the lack of public health resources, he nevertheless stressed that “it is important to establish the principle and stress the key role oral health plays in general health…oral health is a significant factor in how we relate to other people and to society in general.”

Earlier the same day, the FDI President told an audience of high ranking government officials, including the Malaysian Minister of Health, that would be hearing on NCDs held at the UN headquarters in New York on 16 June that the current list—which comprises only cancer, diabetes and respiratory and cardiovascular diseases—should be extended.

Dr Vianna made the call during a submission on behalf of the Malaysian Dental Association (MDA) FDI intervention at the World Dental Congress: the FDI President Dr Roberto Vianna and FDI President-Elect Dr Orlando Montenegro Silva

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Dental Federation, which represents the collective views of more than a million dentists, through national dental associations in more than 134 countries.

Diseases of the mouth, tooth decay, periodontal or gum diseases, and cancer of the mouth, are some of the most common chronic, non-communicable diseases, affecting more than 90% of the world’s population. These oral diseases are significant burden on overall health and risk factors are shared with other non-communicable diseases. The World Health Organization recognised this fact with the landmark World Health Assembly Resolution in 2007.

The burden of diseases of the mouth are rising due to rapidly changing lifestyle, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, which can least afford to deal with the consequences, in terms of poor health outcomes and negative impact on national health budgets.

An integrated ‘collaborative’ approach to non-communicable disease prevention, one which includes oral disease prevention and health promotion, will have significant benefits in terms of strengthening health systems and oral health care delivery. Primary Health Care Coverage and improving access to care will help the control of pain and suffering thereby resulting in measurable improvements in general health and quality of life.

FDI works closely with the WHO Global Oral Health Programme, in efforts to strengthen integrated approaches to disease prevention based on common risk factors and health promotion. FDI urges WHO to recognize oral diseases as major global noncommunicable diseases and call for their inclusion in the Outcomes Document of the UN High Level Summit on Noncommunicable Diseases in New York this September.
The highly successful Live.Learn.Laugh. (LLL) Partnership 2011 Global Workshop, held 3–4 May in Manila, Philippines, focused debate on how a process of continuous evaluation can strengthen the implementation of LLL Phase II projects.

Live.Learn.Laugh. (LLL) refers to the unique global partnership between FDI World Dental Federation and Unilever Oral Care which began in 2004. Following an evaluation of Phase I in 2009, Phase II was launched on 2 September 2010 at the FDI AWDC in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil. This partnership now has a new, more focused goal - "to work together to measurably improve oral health through twice daily brushing with a fluoride toothpaste".

The Manila workshop, attended by 26 representatives from 22 National Dental Associations and members of global partnership team from FDI and Unilever Oral Care, coincided with the 33rd Asia Pacific Dental Congress.

The Global Workshop provided an opportunity to share, together with experts from the FDI World Dental Development and Health Promotion Committee (WDDHPC), best practices and examples of experiential learning through a variety of presentations and group discussions.

Participants were also able to gain useful insights into the power of communications tools—such as the press launch of the Philippines LLL Phase II project—to leverage the impact of work by the Live.Learn.Laugh. Partnership on public health.

In the light of the successful Global Workshop, FDI is looking forward to working with its National Dental Association members and Unilever Oral Care to ensure positive outcomes for all Phase II projects in the coming years.

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