GENEVA / NEW YORK½19 September 2011 -- The World Health Organization (WHO) welcomes the adoption today by the UN General Assembly of the political declaration on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke, chronic respiratory disease and cancer which together kill some 36 million people each year. For the first time, global leaders have reached consensus in the General Assembly on concrete actions to tackle these diseases.

Governments agreed on the need for global targets to monitor these diseases and their risk factors like tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol. The UN General Assembly has asked WHO to develop a framework for monitoring global progress and to prepare, before the end of 2012, recommendations for a set of global targets to monitor trends and assess the progress in countries to reduce the toll of suffering, disability and premature death due to these diseases.

Global leaders committed to greater efforts to prevent and treat noncommunicable diseases and improve health care including better access to vital medicines. Success will depend on the engagement of non-health sectors such as finance, agriculture, transportation, urban development, and trade. Governments will integrate policies to reduce noncommunicable diseases into health planning processes and national development agendas.

The declaration is a clear signal that global leaders acknowledge the devastating impact of noncommunicable diseases worldwide and that they are committed to reducing it. The next step is to act on those commitments.

Related links:

United Nations high-level meeting on noncommunicable disease prevention and control http://www.who.int/nmh/events/un_ncd_summit2011/en/index.html