

Thank you for the kind introduction Mr. President.

I am honored to be here as a physician and a scientist, but most of all as an **advocate**.

And I represent a social movement to tackle NCDs as the social justice issue of our generation.

As part of your deliberations for the NCD response, I want to focus on **two** short points for the Future of our Health.

First, **Solidarity on Trade & Health**

Just six months ago, I bore witness to the testimony of South Africa's Director General of Health at the WHO.

She testified, powerfully, that a US-based public relations firm enlisted by over 2 dozen pharmaceutical companies was planning a subversive campaign to halt reforms to South Africa's intellectual property and trade policy.

These reforms, if passed, **would have safeguarded** access to medicines for all diseases – from HIV/AIDS to cancer, from diabetes to dengue.

I stood so very proud of what happened next.

Director General Margaret Chan and Member States rose in **solidarity** with South Africa to speak out against undue corporate influence.

One such ally to South Africa was Australia.

Australia relayed it's own battle to invoke TRIPS flexibilities in their fight against tobacco, including the landmark **Plain Packaging Act in 2011**. Australia dared to challenge the tobacco industry.

The storyline of what happened next is all too familiar. 3 major tobacco firms came together to fund a \$9 million campaign to destroy Australia's efforts. Lawsuit after lawsuit.

Whether it is access to medicines, tobacco control, salt reduction, reduction of marketing of sugary drinks to children, we understand behind the scenes the enormous pressures you face to stand up for the public's health.

We get it.

As civil society, our avowed responsibility is to respectfully stand with you.

But please know that we are also watching you. We are a mobilizing a people's movement.

We will seek to hold you accountable and transparent through initiatives such as Countdown 2025, building off the success of Countdown 2015 for maternal and child health.

Second, **Money**

I am painfully aware that some Member States in this austere hall have called for '**no new resources.**'

Yesterday, I spoke with a colleague from the private sector who is leading a charge on funding for NCDs.

He asked, pointedly: "where is the **public sector investment** on this?"

Member States, where are you?

- At the international level. I understand the contributions for the **global coordination mechanism** - a unique partnership to address the greatest disease burden in mankind's history — averages to **\$10,000 per member state**.

\$10,000. That's it. That is a paltry \$1.8 million in total. Or. 0.00002 cents per person.

Respected leaders, can we and should we not do better!?

- At the country level, How can a country with just \$40 per person/year on health - or as low as \$19— do anything on NCDs?

We know that to have impact on NCDs we must be part of a broader agenda on health and human development.

And while calls for increased financing go on, one **concrete step** is the development of NCD units at the country level whose mandate is to institute action across clinical, public health and regulatory domains.

But our experience is that these NCD **Units have not even scratched the surface of their true potential.**

One way to help these Units to actualize their potential is to invest in human capital to lead these units.

From my work with the Young Professionals Chronic Disease Network, with members in over 130 countries, I can affirm there are nutritionists from Dhaka to Delhi, lawyers from London to Lagos, and physicians from Nairobi to New York and people living with NCDs who are stepping up with p passion – but have little support. No outlet.

This generation has untold and untapped human capital to lead on NCDs, but needs guidance. And we need it now.

To this end, what if the global coordination mechanism, the NCD partnership, could help address this gap at the country level?

Imagine this: A Fellowship for the Future, an NCD Core Fund, that is resourced, modestly, to equip and position 10 young leaders from each Member State here to staff NCD Units in all Member States by 2018

Finally, I would like to take step back to remind ourselves how we came to this moment.

I would not be speaking to you were it not for the transformative advocacy of people living with NCDs in the first instance.

In 2011, when you met for the first ever High Level Meeting on NCDs, our collective peacefully assembled outside UN HQ in a demonstration for equity, action and targets.

One of the people standing with us was a close friend, Gloria Borges.

At the tender age of 28, she was diagnosed with Stage IV colon cancer

After dozens of surgeries and over 40 rounds of chemotherapy, she summoned the strength to travel to NYC.

She took the bullhorn. And this was her message to you on Sep 19, 2011:

Do something.

Ladies and gentleman, On Jan 5 of this year, Gloria Borges passed away.

I dedicate this statement on behalf of civil society to her and all the Gloria's around the world.

And right here and right now I want to give voice to her soulful plea directly to you, the decision makers.

Let us not succumb to the chronic disease of inaction; to the cancer of empty rhetoric.

Do something.

We can start with solidarity on trade, leveraging platforms to empower the next generation in a Fellowship for the Future, and tapping into the soul of a generation -- of your people -- to obliterate the social injustice of NCDs.

Thank you.