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Copenhagen Roadmap for Diabetes

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Eric de Roodenbeke, IHF Chief Executive Officer, participated in the European Diabetes Forum <http://www.diabetesleadershipforum.eu/>, organized - 25-26 April 2012 - by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Danish Diabetes Association under the auspice of the Danish Ministry of Health.

Possible solutions to the diabetes question are known and are well described in the Copenhagen road map - http://www.senato.it/documenti/repository/commissioni/comm12/documenti_acquisiti/copenhagen%20roadmap.pdf . The urgency now lies in the need to better mobilize all stakeholders and move them from advocacy to result-oriented actions

This meeting dominated by health professional, was an illustration of a situation where speakers are preaching to the converted but are not reaching out to those who should change their policies to influence risk factors.

This illustrates also the current challenges with chronic conditions for which most preventive measures have to be taken outside the 'jurisdiction' of ministries of health. Ministries of health and all other health-related stakeholders become advocates for actions to be taken by finance ministers, agriculture ministers, trade and commerce ministers, etc. It seems that as long as global public health threats are not place high on society's agenda, chances to achieve results are limited. For this to happen it will be necessary to engage the civil society to push the issue of global public health threats as a major political agenda item. In the current economic and social climates, it is very difficult to envision such a mobilization although the absence of proper answer to the chronic condition threats will dramatically aggravate the economic and social situation in the coming years. It is the responsibility of all health stakeholders to participate in such awareness campaigns in addition to all their other respective work programmes. We are all confronted with the crisis, however, it should not hide the longer term threats which have to be addressed now, before they become a major source of crisis on their own.

This meeting was also an opportunity to consider the need for changes in health services to address the multidimensional nature of diabetes. Continuum of care and patient-centered care, need to be implemented, in order to provide effective responses to those already suffering from diabetes. The way forward is obvious in principle but implementation is limited by the multiplicity of funders and payment systems in each country. The rationale behind the financing of healthcare is not supportive of a change in the delivery model. For this reason the IHF representative in the meeting asked for the roadmap to be completed by an outcome framework indicating:

- how countries have made efforts in changing health service payment systems to align incentives for patient-centered care
- what results are actually achieved by way of transparent monitoring and evaluation of progress on key targets

In addition it is also important to include in policy development a mechanism to benchmark practices and results and to recognize and celebrate best performers. It is not because diabetes is a major source of concern for the sustainability of health systems that all communications should be alarming. It is also important to give more light to accomplishment which gives also hope for the future.

