Solidarity is Power declares Global Anti-Stroke Organization on World Stroke Day

GENEVA | 29 October 2012 – Today is World Stroke Day. The World Stroke Organization (WSO), a Geneva-based international health association and its members are calling for stroke communities worldwide to unite and demand accountability from national and regional health authorities in addressing the growing burden of stroke. According to WSO, 1 in 6 people worldwide will have a stroke and every six seconds, someone suffers a stroke. Stroke is the leading cause of disability and can strike at any age and at anytime.

On World Stroke Day 2012, the WSO, along with selected member organizations, is launching the stroke solidarity string. Until now, this disease which kills nearly six million people each year has not had a universally recognized awareness symbol. The stroke solidarity string is being promoted by WSO and its member organizations as the symbol for global stroke awareness. The indigo-colored string represents the connection between all people touched by stroke, the flow of blood and the healthy function of the brain and body. Wearing the solidarity string signifies empowerment and being united with the stroke community. It can be worn on any day of the year, but especially today, World Stroke Day.

“The global connectivity symbolized by the stroke solidarity string underlines our one World Voice for Stroke" says WSO president Stephen Davis. He adds “we are all connected by our mission of reducing the global burden of stroke through better prevention, acute treatment and post-stroke care.”

The string is the result of an international competition, spearheaded by WSO, to identify a recognizable stroke awareness symbol. It called for submissions from stroke communities around the world, including stroke survivors, artists and designers. A panel comprised of distinguished stroke professionals chose the winning entry submitted by Anna Carlile and Joanna Gardener of viola design, an Australian communication design studio in Melbourne, for its “versatility and dynamism that could be applied to a myriad of campaign materials”.

Asked about how they felt in being selected for the WSO award, Anna explains " “It really is a tremendous honor to be able to create an international symbol, especially one for such an important cause,” she said.

Among WSO member organizations promoting the stroke solidarity string this year are the (1) American Stroke Association; (2) National Stroke Foundation – Australia; (3) Brazilian Stroke Society; (4) Indian Stroke Association; (5) Russian Stroke Foundation ; and, (6) The Stroke Association UK.
Consistent with the message of solidarity, the theme selected for World Stroke Day this year is "Because I Care... ". The theme can easily be adapted to all cultures and in any setting. Myths and misconceptions about stroke remain and the slogan attempts to address prevailing misinformation about the disease, e.g., stroke only happens later in life. It also celebrates the important contributions of caregivers, family and close friends – as those in the frontlines providing the supportive care. Caregivers are the conduits between the stroke community and the general public in correcting misinformation as they know first-hand the reality of stroke.

Because I care ...
- I want you to know the facts about stroke
- I will work to break down the myths surrounding stroke
- I want you to learn how to minimize your risk of stroke
- I want you to have access to the best possible treatment
- I will ensure that you receive quality treatment, care and support
- I will be with you every step of the way towards your full recovery

"Because I Care" will be the theme of the campaign for the next two years and will address issues related to stroke prevention, treatment as well as care and support. More information can be obtained by visiting www.worldstrokecampaign.org

About the World Stroke Organization
The World Stroke Organization (WSO) was established in October 2006. As the lead international body for stroke, WSO aims to accomplish its mission by:
- Fostering the best standards of practice
- Increasing stroke awareness in the population and among health professionals
- Influencing policies for stroke prevention and improved health services
- Educating in collaboration with other public and private organizations
- Facilitating stroke research
- Advocacy for people with stroke

With individual and organizational members worldwide, including stroke support groups, WSO is the global voice for stroke. WSO is the only international stroke NGO in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO).