NEWS RELEASE

WSO to represent the global fight against stroke at UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs

WSO president to represent the global fight against stroke at the first United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Non-Communicable Diseases in New York

Geneva | 19 September 2011 – The World Stroke Organization (WSO) has been invited to participate at the first UN High-Level meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases this week in New York. The gathering which is being attended by several heads of state, public health leaders and key decision-makers is a key milestone in the global campaign to stem the impacts of stroke, heart diseases, cancers, diabetes, lung diseases and other chronic diseases. It will address the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) worldwide, with a particular focus on development, social and economic impacts, particularly as it relates to developing countries. This landmark meeting comes some 10 years after the first UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS which established the need for high-level political advocacy and commitment in fighting a global public health issue.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the global burden of disease is shifting from infectious diseases to NCDs, with chronic conditions such as heart disease and stroke now being the leading causes of death worldwide. Stroke is the second leading cause of disability, after dementia. There are strong links between the two diseases, other NCDs – and the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations.

“I am very pleased to be a part of this impressive gathering of world leaders and hope that solutions can be identified to avert a looming global health crisis” notes WSO president Bo Norrving. Some 15 million people suffer a stroke each year. Every six seconds, someone somewhere will die from stroke. Stroke claims the lives of nearly six million people each year. The reality is that many of these deaths are preventable.” These numbers are more than mere statistics, these are real people – the time to act is now! ”adds Prof. Norrving emphatically.

WSO is also pleased to have been present during the launch of the joint WSO/World Heart Federation/World Health Organization Atlas on Cardio-Vascular Diseases on Saturday, 17 September. The publication reveals country-specific CVD rates, therefore pinpointing where government, individual and donor action is most needed to address the growing global burden. Some of the poorest countries in the world (such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Malawi) have among the highest age-standardized CVD mortality rates. Strategic alliances and partnerships have been key pillars in WSO’s mission to eradicate the global burden of stroke.
The WSO launched its own global advocacy campaign on World Stroke Day 2010 to scale-up global awareness about stroke. World Stroke Day is annually commemorated on 29 October. The campaign, called “1 in 6” aims to disseminate life-saving information and share knowledge about actions and lifestyle behaviors that could avert the assault of stroke. As noted above, the theme “1 in 6” was aptly selected to reflect today’s reality that one in six people worldwide will have a stroke in their lifetime. Stroke remains a leading cause of disability worldwide.

About the World Stroke Organization – The World Stroke Organization (WSO) was established in October 2006. Its mission is to provide access to stroke care, promote research and knowledge by (1) promoting prevention and care for persons with stroke and vascular dementia; (2) fostering the best standards of practice; (3) educating, in collaboration with other international, public, and private organizations; and (4) facilitating clinical research. With individual and organizational members worldwide, WSO is the global voice for stroke. WSO is an international NGO in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO).