

FINAL

Statement by the APEC High-Level Meeting on Health & the Economy

“Investing in a Healthy Life Course”

27 June 2012

In 2011, APEC Member Economies recognized that the rapid rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among our populations poses a fundamental negative influence on the future economic growth and development of our region. They acknowledged that health is an economic asset that should be preserved and enhanced to drive sustainable economic growth.

This year the Russian Federation identified health as a critical component of its goal to enhance innovative growth in the region. To that end, the Russian Federation proposed a focus on enhancing healthy populations throughout their life course starting from maternal, infant and child health which will provide the foundation for future health. Access to quality care and healthy choices by parents, combined with preventive interventions in the first 1000 days of infant and children's life will help to prevent the early onset and progression of NCDs such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases and cancer, and ensure a healthy and productive life course in the future. Maternal, infant and child health services can also provide the basis for the development of broader health systems that combat other priorities, in particular chronic diseases.

On 27 June 2012, the Russian Federation's chairmanship in APEC convened the APEC High-Level Meeting on Health & the Economy, a joint session of the Health Working Group (HWG) and the Life Sciences Innovation Forum (LSIF). The meeting brought together officials from 21 Pacific-Rim economies with industry leaders and academic experts to examine high impact investments in economically cost-effective measures toward the healthy life style, early detection, prevention, early intervention, and management of NCDs throughout the entire human life course, from maternity and prenatal care through old age, to prevent and reduce the impact on economic growth and productivity.

Drawing on preliminary results from a joint APEC LSIF-WHO study on the returns to investment in maternal and child health, high level officials, industry leaders, and senior representatives from health and economic development agencies discussed the economic rationale for investing in innovative interventions early in life as a means to reducing the burden of chronic diseases later in adulthood.

They noted that such investments have powerful and broad economic and social benefits, as a basis for a strong economy and healthy society foundation. Better maternal and child health strengthens families and local communities; enhances the contribution that the women, and in due course the children as they become adults, make to the economy; reduces the longer term burden of NCDs and cuts the cost of diagnosing and treating disease through the life course. They concluded that effective investments in maternal and child health have very high returns, and are among the best investments that economies can make to enhance the future welfare of their populations.

APEC Economies noted the Political Declaration from the United Nations High Level meeting on NCDs in September 2011 and the APEC NCD Action Plan endorsed by APEC Ministers in November 2011. They also noted the work already underway by the World Health Organization in developing a Global Monitoring Framework for NCDs.

We thus agreed to call on APEC Member economies to:

- Invest in the health of our populations at all stages of life in order to fully capture the economic returns of a healthy and productive population.
- Seize the key opportunities throughout the life course – from pre- and peri-natal care, adolescence, working adulthood, and old age - to invest in cost-effective and high impact interventions that would prevent and control NCDs, promote healthy aging, and reduce the impact of common NCD risk factors, such as tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol.
- Prioritize access by mothers and infants to quality health care, vaccination programs to combat infectious diseases, prevention and early detection and management of NCD throughout the life course, through the availability of effective systems of primary care and the creation of an innovative culture at all levels of the health system.
- Also recognize the critical importance of and prioritize work place health and wellness programs, the promotion of healthy life styles, including those that substantially reduce tobacco consumption and the harmful use of alcohol.
- Request APEC Finance Ministers to develop budget processes and measures that drive good health as a source of economic growth and development.