

Africa's silent epidemic

78% of people with diabetes in Africa are undiagnosed

BRUSSELS NOVEMBER 14, 2011 World Diabetes Day 2011 marks the release of the International Diabetes Federation's 5th edition of the Diabetes Atlas. New figures indicate that the number of people living with diabetes is expected to rise from 366 million in 2011 to 552 million by 2030. In sub-Saharan Africa where infectious disease has traditionally dominated health systems, rates of diabetes are soaring. The number of people living with diabetes in Africa has now risen to 14.7 million. This is expected to increase to 28 million by 2030, around a 90% increase. Worryingly it is people in their most productive years, under the age of 60, who are suffering the full force of the epidemic.

The highest prevalence of diabetes in the Africa region is in the island of Reunion (16,3 %) followed by the Seychelles. Some of Africa's most populous countries also have the highest number of people with diabetes, with Nigeria having the largest number at 3 million followed by South Africa at 1.9 million.

Silver Bahendeka, Chair of IDF's Africa region said "In Africa we need to encourage strengthening of our national health systems to encourage earlier diagnosis and prevent onset of later complications, which increase the social and economic burden on already poor areas".

The regional figures echo the shocking increase in diabetes on a global level. "In every country and in every community worldwide, we are losing the battle against this cruel and deadly disease" said Jean Claude Mbanya, President of the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) "We want World Diabetes Day 2011 to bring these alarming diabetes facts into the global spotlight. We demand that public and world leaders act on diabetes now".

The release of these figures follow the September meeting of 193 Heads of State and government at the UN in New York to agree on a Political Declaration on Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) including diabetes. This marks a major milestone for diabetes and NCDs. However in some areas stronger commitments are needed.

"World leaders have recognised the magnitude and impact of these diseases and the urgent need for action. In some key areas we wanted stronger commitments and targets but the Declaration will accelerate international progress on diabetes and NCDs, saving millions of people from preventable death and disability" said Ann Keeling, CEO, International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and Chair of the NCD Alliance.

IDF is now looking toward the future and translating UN commitments into action by fostering a new level of partnership. Beyond the Summit, IDF envisages 'Triple P Partnerships' involving public, private and people.

It is hoped that campaigns such as today's World Diabetes Day will continue to raise the voice of people with diabetes and move advocacy to action on a global scale.

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About World Diabetes Day

World Diabetes Day (WDD) is celebrated every year on November 14. The World Diabetes Day campaign is led by the [International Diabetes Federation \(IDF\)](http://www.idf.org) and its member associations. It engages millions of people worldwide in diabetes advocacy and awareness. World Diabetes Day was created in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation and the World Health Organization in response to growing concerns about the escalating health threat that diabetes now poses. World Diabetes Day became an official United Nations Day in 2007 with the passage of United Nation Resolution 61/225. The campaign draws attention to issues of paramount importance to the diabetes world and keeps diabetes firmly in the public spotlight. This year sees the third of a five-year campaign that will address the growing need for diabetes education and prevention programmes.

www.worlddiabetesday.org

About the International Diabetes Federation (IDF)

The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) is an umbrella organisation of over 200 national diabetes associations in over 160 countries. It represents the interests of the growing number of people with diabetes and those at risk. The Federation has been leading the global diabetes community since 1950. IDF's mission is to promote diabetes care, prevention and a cure worldwide. www.idf.org

For more information on the 5th edition **Diabetes Atlas** and country-by-country statistics visit:

<http://www.idf.org/diabetesatlas/>

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