# *\*\*Press Release Embargoed: 8h00am - 19 November 2013*

# Press Release

**Experts Come Together To Close The Cancer Divide by 2025**

 *Announcement calls for significant global action in addressing*

*Disparities in cancer control*

**Tuesday, 19 November 2013: Cape Town, South Africa** – United Nations (UN) officials, Ministries of Health and leading international decision makers have come together for the first time in Africa to discuss the growing global cancer burden at the 2013 World Cancer Leaders’ Summit (WCLS) which took place today at Cape Town City Hall.

Organised by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and hosted by the Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA), the event is an important forum to secure a coordinated, multilevel global response to address the spiralling cancer epidemic in low- and middle-income countries and to ensure that cancer control is fully recognised in the world health and development agendas.

The WCLS represents a significant response from the global cancer community to the recent commitment made by the UN to achieve the global goal of reducing premature deaths from NCDs by 25% by 2025.

“The theme of this year's Summitis ‘Closing the Cancer Divide by 2025’ which highlights the urgent need to address the glaring disparities in cancer control within and across national, international and regional boundaries,” said Professor Mary Gospodarowicz, President of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). “It is of particular significance that we are in Africa today, a region that is seeing an overwhelming increase in cancer incidence and deaths.”

According to the World Health Organization, more than 12 million people worldwide will be diagnosed with cancer this year, of which approximately eight million will die. Often misconceived as a disease of wealthy, developed populations the truth is that over 70% of cancer deaths actually occur in low- and middle-income countries. And without sustained action, cancer incidence is projected to increase by 70% in middle-income countries and 82% in lower-income countries by 2030.[[1]](#endnote-1)

Cancer affects countries all over the world, but countries lacking the health infrastructure to cope with the increasing number of people affected by the disease are particularly affected.

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CEO of CANSA and cancer survivor, Sue Janse Van Rensburg, explained the importance of ensuring better access, better reporting and having more data available so that cancer can be controlled in an effective manner. “We needed this very important event to create more awareness, especially amongst the leaders in cancer control in Africa.”

According to CANSA, more than 100,000 South Africans are diagnosed with cancer every year. Local issues around cancer in South Africa include early detection, access to information and treatment and women’s cancers, which has been a big focus of the Summit this year.

Ms Zoleka Mandela, a cancer advocate and survivor, attended the Summit to share her involvement and highlighted the importance of early detection, “Women’s cancers are the most prevalent cancer among sub-Saharan Africa women. With few exceptions, early stage cancers are more treatable than late stage cancers, so access to early detection, screening and treatment programmes are critical.”

The WCLS addressed how the global cancer community can support low- and middle-income countries to improve the collection and understanding of cancer information in their countries, heighten awareness of and the treatment of women’s cancers and what options exist to improve the treatment of and access to essential cancer medicines and technologies for the disease. Delegates embracing academia, civil society organisations and the private sector agreed to help support governments in the implementation of strong, action-oriented national cancer control plans in all countries by sharing best practice and information.

“With cancer incidence set to rise dramatically in low- and middle-income countries in the next twenty years, an unsustainable burden is falling on these nations, both economically and socially. The international cancer community must commit support and expertise to help the low- and middle-income countries address this trend through measures adapted to the specific cancer patterns occurring in these populations," commented Professor Gospodarowicz.

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 **Notes to editors**

**\***NCCPs are strategic, national-level programmes for cancer control based on a country’s risk factor, burden, and available resources.

**Notes to Editor:**

Overview of current global cancer landscape:

* An increasing number of people globally are being affected by cancer
* Cancer is an increasing burden socially and economically
* Approximately 70% of cancer deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries
* According to WHO, approx. 30% of cancers could be prevented

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* Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for 7.6 million deaths (around 13% of all deaths) in 2008
* Lung, stomach, liver, colon and breast cancer cause the most cancer deaths each year
* Deaths from cancer worldwide are projected to continue rising, with an estimated 13.1 million deaths in 2030

Local issues around cancer in South Africa:

* Early detection
* Cost of treatment
* Access to treatment and updated information
* Women’s cancers with emphasis on cervical and breast

**ABOUT THE WCLS**

First organised in 2008, the World Cancer Leaders’ Summit (WCLS) is the most important annual high-level policy meeting dedicated exclusively to influencing global strategy for cancer control. The event brings together key decision makers from around the world and encourages timely debate on emerging issues related to cancer. It provides a vital forum to secure a global, cross-sector, response and ensure accountability in addressing the spiraling cancer epidemic.

**About UICC**

UICC unites the cancer community to reduce the global cancer burden, to promote greater equity, and to integrate cancer control into the world health and development agenda.

A membership organisation founded in 1933 and based in Geneva, UICC’s growing membership of over 800 organisations across 155 countriesfeatures the world’s major cancer societies, ministries of health, research institutes and patient groups. Together with its members, key partners, the World Health Organization, World Economic Forum and others, UICC is tackling the growing cancer crisis on a global scale.

For more information visit: [www.uicc.org](http://www.uicc.org).

**ABOUT CANSA**

CANSA offers a unique integrated service to the public and all people affected by cancer. As a leading role-player in cancer research (more than R6 million spent annually), the scientific findings and knowledge gained from our research are used to realign our health programmes as well as strengthen our watchdog role to the greater benefit of the public. Our wide-reaching health programme comprises prevention and education campaigns; over 30 CANSA Care Centres that offer stoma support and organisational management; medical equipment hire; a toll-free line and support to those affected by cancer; patient care and support in the form of

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12 CANSA Care Homes in the main metropolitan areas for out-of-town cancer patients plus one hospitium based in Polokwane, as well as CANSA-TLC lodging for parents and guardians of children undergoing cancer treatment.

**END**

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1. World Bank. Growing Danger of non-communicable diseases. Available at

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/HEALTHNUTRITIONANDPOPULATION/Resources/Peer-Reviewed-Publications/WBDeepeningCrisis.pdf> Last accessed August 2012 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)