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## Cancer fight in developing world gets boost from joint UN initiative



IAEA says making radiotherapy accessible is a key component in any comprehensive cancer control programme

26 May 2009 – Two United Nations agencies are launching a joint initiative aimed at strengthening and accelerating efforts to fight cancer in developing countries, using their respective strengths in the areas of health and radiation medicine.

Cancer is projected to be among the leading causes of deaths worldwide, with more than 70 per cent of all fatalities occurring in low- and middle-income countries, according to the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), which has teamed up with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the Joint Programme on Cancer Control.

“In low- and middle-income countries, cancer overwhelmingly affects the poor. This has huge implications for human suffering, health systems, health budgets and the drive to reduce poverty,” said WHO Director-General Margaret Chan, who signed the new agreement with [IAEA](#) Director General Mohamed ElBaradei.

“The IAEA has long provided radiation technology and expertise to developing countries, but radiotherapy alone cannot halt the growing global cancer crisis,” said Mr. ElBaradei.

“The Joint Programme with WHO underlines our conviction that only through combined effort and collaboration can we bring hope and relief to those whose lives are threatened by cancer.”

The new initiative will set the stage for the two agencies to work together, building on their areas of expertise to create a more coordinated and robust approach to combating cancer in poor countries.

In a related development, Dr. Chan has appointed Nancy Goodman Brinker, founder of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, as WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Cancer Control.

Ms. Brinker, a former United States Ambassador to Hungary, businesswoman, health care advocate and philanthropist, will raise awareness of the need for comprehensive cancer control policies, with an emphasis on poor countries.

“The disease burden has shifted from wealthier to less affluent countries, and her advocacy will help in building awareness in low- and middle-income countries,” said Dr. Chan.

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[\*\*UN nuclear agency calls for lighter, cheaper cancer therapy equipment\*\*](#)