



Ban urges support for developing countries in combating diabetes



A young boy gives blood to be tested for diabetes

14 November 2009 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called for greater support to developing countries in preventing diabetes, which kills at least one million people every year, and in increasing access to health care.

In a **message** marking World Diabetes Day, Mr. Ban noted that the illness can make other diseases worse, and can have a terrible impact on maternal and child health.

“In some countries, the rapidly rising burden of diabetes is a factor in faltering progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),” he said, referring to the pledges world leaders made to slash a host of social ills, including extreme hunger and poverty, infant and maternal mortality, and lack of access to education and health care – all by 2015.

At the same time, the Secretary-General noted that Type 2 diabetes is preventable. It is among the so-called “lifestyle diseases” – along with cardio-vascular disease and some cancers – attributable to unhealthy diets, a lack of exercise, tobacco use and the abuse of alcohol play.

“This means that effective strategies and plans of action will not be limited to the health sector alone,” he said. “Rather, they should involve many areas of government and a wide range of actors, including civil society and the private sector.

“Prevention can help reduce poverty, promote economic productivity and keep countries on track in their efforts to achieve the MDGs,” he added.

More than 220 million people worldwide have diabetes, according to the UN World Health Organization (**WHO**), which adds that a healthy diet, regular physical activity, maintaining a normal body weight and avoiding tobacco use can prevent or delay the onset of the disease.

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