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## **Pacific island leaders call at UN for greater efforts against lifestyle-related diseases**



Danny Philip, Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, addresses the general debate

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Lifestyle-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are taking an enormous toll in human health and economic development on the Pacific islands, the leaders of two countries in the region told the United Nations today, calling for accelerated efforts to defeat the problem.

Such diseases are a “pandemic” in the Pacific, claiming six out of every 10 lives, [said](#) Danny Philip, Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, in an address to the General Assembly’s annual general debate.

Mr. Philip said his country had put in place a strategic plan for the next five years to try to overcome NCDs, which include cancers, heart disease and diabetes.

“Prevention remains the cornerstone of our NCD policy and the development of our primary health coverage,” he said, adding that “we will continue to need sustained external support in the short- to medium-term” to implement key programmes.

Lord Tu’ivakano, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Tonga, [said](#) that, left unchecked, NCDs in countries such as his own “threatens not just livelihoods and lifestyle, but whatever that may have been achieved” towards the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)) – the globally agreed set of anti-poverty targets.

He said there were five areas in which Tonga and other Pacific island countries were focusing their efforts: tobacco control, better diets, increasing physical activity, reducing alcohol intake and improving access to beneficial drugs and technologies.

This week the General Assembly held a high-level meeting on NCDs, with world leaders pledging to launch an all-out attack against the risk factors – such as smoking, drinking alcohol or a lack of exercise – behind the soaring numbers of people suffering from NCDs worldwide.

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