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ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review  
Regional Ministerial Meeting for Western Asia on  
“Addressing Noncommunicable Diseases and Injuries: Major Challenges to  
Sustainable Development in the 21st century”

Closing Statement by H.E. Ambassador Sylvie Lucas,  
Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the United Nations,  
President of the Economic and Social Council

11 May, Doha, Qatar

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate the Government of Qatar for holding this meeting. As our discussions over the last two days have shown, the theme - addressing noncommunicable diseases and injuries - was most relevant and timely for the region.

The risk of seeing the issue of noncommunicable diseases left aside amidst the global financial and economic crisis and the recent outbreak of the H1N1 flu, has been mentioned by some. We must ensure that this does not happen : the incidence of noncommunicable diseases is too high; the health challenge to global development posed too great for us to let that happen. And I am confident that this meeting and the most important messages that will be brought by H.E. the Minister of Health of Qatar to

the attention of the Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva in July, will ensure that it doesn't happen.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our discussions have produced a wealth of ideas and recommendations on how to strengthen efforts in this area in order to achieve the health-related development goals. I will highlight just a few out of those :

First, the need for political commitment, for leadership at Government level, but also for community involvement and empowerment.

Noncommunicable diseases and injuries are largely preventable through cost-effective solutions, through public policy initiatives and community-based interventions.

Second, the need for a multi-sectoral approach mobilizing actors beyond the health sector, across Ministries;

Third the need for risk factor reduction;

Fourth, the importance of mainstreaming solutions into development programmes and the overall health system, in particular primary care services.

At the level of the Economic and Social Council we are only too aware of the importance of the health related development goals for the achievement of the global development agenda. We will endeavour to use the Council's convening power to bring together decision-makers from diverse sectors and to galvanize action by all relevant actors on this important issue.

I am confident that this meeting will be remembered as an event that mobilized not only the region but helped also to attract global attention to the challenges of noncommunicable diseases and injuries.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, one word, if I may, about next year's ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review.

The theme of the 2010 AMR - gender equality and empowerment of women - is also highly relevant for your region. I look forward to other ESCWA members to volunteer hosting a regional event, on the basis of this year's very successful experience.

I would also like to invite the region's Member States to consider making National Voluntary Presentations to ECOSOC during future Ministerial Reviews.

I look forward to seeing you in Geneva in July, at the Council's annual meeting.

Thank you very much for your attention.