The FDI has been lobbying heavily for the inclusion of oral diseases in the WHO’s list of NCDs for years. In February 2011, for example, Executive Director Jean-Luc Esclèr spearheaded a submission by the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA) during a civil society hearing at the UN headquarters in New York, stating that oral diseases share common risk factors with existing NCDs and have a major impact on society.

The federation is also offering an NCD toolkit for both patients and health professionals, which features a health improvement card, among other things, as part of the larger NCD campaign conducted in partnership with the WHPA.

Published on 12 October, the paper “Global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013–2020” identifies the threat of NCDs to achieving health-related development goals in low- and middle-income countries and provides recommendations on addressing the situation over the next seven years.

NCDs currently account for 56 million deaths worldwide each year with the majority to be occurring in less developed countries, according to Geneva-based organisation.

While admitting to current constraints of the WHO, the FDI said in its statement that the leadership role of the WHO is essential to keeping oral health a priority in the fight against NCDs. It stated that it had addressed a formal request to the organisation for the inclusion of oral health in its next general programme of work, which will determine the WHO’s expenditure and goals over the next five to six years.

“WHO recognition of oral disease is essential to support and consolidate the significant role the dental profession plays in the prevention and control of NCDs,” FDI President Orlando Monteiro da Silva told Dental Tribune. “WHO is a governmental organisation so, while FDI can monitor and advise, governments alone are in a position to change WHO strategy and policy. That is why we are calling upon our member dental associations to contact their national government and ensure the oral health message is communicated within WHO.”

WHO’s Global Action Plan on NCD’s pays only lip service to oral health, according to the FDI.

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