

## **Call to Action - Taskforce on Women and Non-Communicable Disease**

**United Nations, New York, March 16, 2017**

**Ambassador Sally Cowal, American Cancer Society on behalf of the Taskforce**

We call out to women leaders and policy makers all over the world.

We call on them to recognize that the health of women and girls is a social justice issue.

NCDs affect women disproportionately as patients, as mothers, as breadwinners, and as care-givers.

NCDs are driving families and communities into poverty—and NCDs are by far the greatest burden of disease everywhere.

The burden of caregiving is on women, and their unpaid labor should be recognized and count toward their countries' GDP.

We call on health systems to embrace a life-course approach in which women access health care from birth to old age; where NCD screening and prevention messages are incorporated into primary and reproductive health facilities, and women's lives are valued beyond their reproductive years.

We call for more gender specific programs, including those for adolescent girls.

We call on leaders to recognize that women are a powerful solution to the NCD crisis—educate a woman and you educate her family, keep her well, and indeed alive, and you will have stronger families, communities and nations. This is the basis of economic development.

We call on leaders to promote an all-of-society approach to NCDs.

We call on world leaders to end the dichotomy between women's rights and women's health, between infectious diseases and NCD's, between problems of rich countries and the problems of poor countries because they are increasingly the same problems.

We call on business and government and civil society to work together on this problem because no one sector can do it alone, but together we can succeed.