



Afghanistan's First Lady Rula Ghani delivered a speech during the World Cancer Day event held in Kabul. Kabul 4 February 2015 - World Cancer Day was observed today in Afghanistan at an event which brought together key health sector stakeholders and senior government officials to highlight the need for stronger measures in the fight against cancer. Cancer is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, accounting for 8.2 million deaths in 2012.

Afghanistan's Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah pledged the government's support to the battle against cancer in his message to the audience, noting that the global cancer burden is constantly growing. Minister of Public Health Dr Firozuddin Feroz emphasized that many cancer deaths could be prevented by modifying or avoiding key risk factors, including tobacco use, obesity, unhealthy diets and lack of physical activity.

Speaking at the event, the First Lady of Afghanistan Rula Ghani said: "cancer is a dangerous disease as it doesn't always have clear signs and symptoms. Screening and early diagnosis are crucial." WHO Country Representative Dr Rik Peepkorn emphasized the important role prevention plays as an effective long-term strategy for cancer control. "Investing in cancer prevention is cheaper and more efficient than dealing with its consequences," said Dr Peepkorn.

Tobacco use is one of the single most important risk factors for cancer. "New tobacco law which would bring with it an increase in tobacco taxation is already endorsed by the Afghan parliament, but still it needs to be implemented. It has been proven in many countries that implementing a substantial tax increase leads to reduced tobacco use and will help to prevent associated cancer," Dr Peepkorn said.



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