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PRESS RELEASE

Distributed by the University of Cape Town on behalf of the World Heart Federation

**World Heart Federation Emerging Leaders to drive improved global access to essential CVD medicines**

- *Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the world's number one killer, causing 17.5 million deaths per year*
- *Access to essential medicines to prevent and treat CVD is worryingly low, particularly in low- and middle-income countries*

2017 marks the fourth year of the World Heart Federation Emerging Leaders programme and will focus on access to essential medicines for cardiovascular diseases. Despite the availability for decades of evidence-based medicines to prevent and treat CVD, their use is still very low.

Access to essential CVD medicines is worryingly low globally and particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where some of the barriers to CVD medicines access include poor access to health care facilities, low availability, poor quality of medication and unaffordability. This places a heavy financial burden on individuals and households, and creates an urgent need to find innovative ways - from policies through to models of care - to improve access to these life-saving medications.

Karen Sliwa, World Heart Federation President-Elect and Director of the University of Cape Town's (UCT's) Hatter Institute says, "When patients are uninsured and have to pay to purchase generic medicines it puts an enormous and relentless financial burden on individuals and households. In many developing countries, the high cost of chronic medicine treatment, including CVD and other non-communicable disease medicines, can often push families below the poverty line."

Launched by former World Heart President Salim Yusuf, the 2017 World Heart Federation Emerging Leaders cohort will build capacity for research and advocacy to support projects which harness local knowledge and global expertise to improve access to medicines through stronger policies and strengthened programmes. Previous cohorts have focused on secondary prevention of CVD, raised blood pressure, and tobacco prevention and control.

Says David Wood, World Heart Federation President, "By developing the next generation of leaders, the Emerging Leaders Programme plays an important role in helping the World Heart Federation to achieve our mission and vision: a 25% reduction in premature mortality cause by CVD by 2025.

Over the next few years, this programme will train more than 125 participants selected to represent at least 50 countries. These individuals will have demonstrated long-term promise through their early career success, creativity and passion for improving cardiovascular health and preventing CVD. As a consequence of their participation in the Emerging Leaders Programme, these professionals will have the capacity to effect change over the remainder of their careers, well beyond 2025."

**-ENDS-**

**For more information, please contact:**

[linda.rhoda@uct.ac.za](mailto:linda.rhoda@uct.ac.za)      021 406 6685      0824511045

[rachel.shaw@worldheart.org](mailto:rachel.shaw@worldheart.org) / 00 44 (0)7986 575834

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### **About the World Heart Federation**

The World Heart Federation is dedicated to leading the global fight against cardiovascular disease (CVD), including heart disease and stroke. We are the only global advocacy and leadership organization bringing together the CVD community

to drive the CVD agenda and help people live longer, better, more heart-healthy lives. Working with more than 200 member organizations in over 100 countries, we strive for a 25% reduction by 2025 in premature deaths from cardiovascular disease around the world. For more information, please visit: [www.worldheart.org](http://www.worldheart.org); [www.facebook.com/worldheartfederation](https://www.facebook.com/worldheartfederation) and [twitter.com/worldheartfed](https://twitter.com/worldheartfed).

### **About the World Heart Federation Emerging Leaders Programme**

Created in 2014, World Heart Federation Emerging Leaders is among the first international training programmes on cardiovascular implementation research. Its main objective is to build up capacity, professional development, mentorship, and networking of CVD Emerging Leaders (ELs) in 100 countries. Each year through a competitive process 25 ELs are selected. The ELs participate in online webinars covering fundamental topics in the field of implementation science, health systems, and health policy research. In addition, the participants also meet face-to-face to participate in an interactive five-day think tank seminar with senior CVD investigators to develop tangible collaborative multinational innovative and interdisciplinary projects with a goal of contributing to the reduction on CVD premature mortality.

### **Emerging Leaders 2017**

Jennifer Jones, United Kingdom

Lilian Mbau, Kenya

Roopa Shivashankar, India

Emily Atkins, Australia

Joao Pedro Ferreira, Portugal

Jose Ferrer, USA/Philippines

Sarah Kraus, South Africa

Tangeni Auala, Namibia

Xiaodong Guan, China

Abhishek Sharma, India

Ahmadou Jingi, Cameroon

Alberto Morales Salinas, Cuba

Asim Katbeth, Syria

Christelle Crickmore, South Africa

Karla Santo, Brazil

Neusa Jessen, Mozambique  
Rajmohan Panda, India  
Salim Virani, USA  
Shiva Raj Mishra, Nepal  
Augustine Odili, Nigeria  
Sainimere Boladuadua, Fiji  
Adrianna Murphy, Canada/Rwanda  
Godsent Isiguzo, South Africa  
Jordan Jarvis, USA  
Sandeep Kishore, USA