

The NCD Alliance

Putting non-communicable diseases
on the global agenda

Statement for the WHO EURO Regional Meeting, September 10th-September 13th, Valletta Malta

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this statement on behalf of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and the NCD Alliance.

For too long, non-communicable diseases – cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes, as well as mental health and neurological disorders – have been a hidden epidemic. As described by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, they represent “a public health emergency in slow motion”. Largely caused by tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol, NCDs result in around 9 million deaths before the age of 60 each year.

We commend the landmark decision at the 65th World Health Assembly in May, when governments took the bold step of adopting the first ever global target on NCDs, committing themselves to reducing preventable deaths from NCDs by 25% by 2025. Reaching this vital goal will be a challenge, especially in view of the underlying trends for these diseases in many countries. A whole of government and whole of society approach is essential to reverse the escalating global NCD epidemic.

Ladies and gentlemen, our organisations commit to supporting Member States and WHO in scaling up action on NCDs, and we call on Member States to:

One: Support the development of a comprehensive Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs for 2013-2020

To have maximum impact over the period of 2013-2020, we urge Member States to support the following points. First, the new plan must build on the progress and momentum achieved by the previous WHO Action Plan on NCDs, and through other vehicles during the same period. Second, it must reflect the changed global political landscape, including the adoption of the UN NCD Political Declaration. Third, the plan must respond to the opportunities presented by the end date in 2015 of the Millennium Development Goals.

Two: Support the development of a Global Monitoring Framework, with targets and indicators, that is integrated into the Global Action Plan

We ask Member States to agree to establish and resource a robust framework and to agree to bold targets to drive progress towards the overarching mortality target. We specifically request Member States to support targets on all four major risk factors and to ensure a balance between targets on prevention, treatment and care. We believe reporting progress every two years is essential and encourage Member State to support this.

Three: Support the establishment of a Global Coordinating Platform on NCDs

Led by Member States and UN agencies, civil society and the private sector, this platform would facilitate a renewed multisectoral movement for NCDs. With appropriate safeguards against vested interests, it should have the responsibility to fully support a global plan for NCDs and coordinate action between key sectors and partners. We will not turn the tide on NCDs by continuing the same fragmented and piecemeal responses from the past – it’s time to work together in a renewed global effort.

Four: Put NCDs at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda

As the world begins to review the impact of the MDGs and plan for a new framework after their expiry in 2015, we call on governments ensure NCD prevention and control are at the heart of the next development framework within an overall health goal.

In conclusion, the adoption of the mortality target at the World Health Assembly increased the momentum to develop a comprehensive NCD Framework. Let us build on that opportunity. With strong leadership from WHO and its Member States, with the support of the UN system, civil society, and other stakeholders, we can make significant progress in curtailing this epidemic and save millions of people from avoidable suffering, illness, disability and death.

