

Statement by the European Heart Network (EHN) and the World Heart Federation (WHF) made at the sixty-third session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe, Çeşme Izmir, Turkey, 16-19 September 2012 on Agenda items 3 (a) and 3 (b)

August 2013

STATEMENT

3 (a) - Follow-up to the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

On behalf of the European Heart Network and the World Heart Federation, we would like to thank the World Health Organization for its leadership in the follow up to the political declaration of the High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) in 2011. We acknowledge the significant work carried out to develop, in consultation with Member States and civil society, an ambitious set of nine targets and 25 indicators around reducing the burden of NCDs with an overarching target of a 25 per cent reduction in premature NCD mortality by 2025.

At the heart of these goals and risk factors are cardiovascular diseases (CVD), the leading cause of death in Europe and, increasingly, across the globe. We are committed to “25 by 25” for CVD.

We call on the WHO Regional Office for Europe to support a Global Coordinating Mechanism (GCM) that can track progress on the agreed targets and indicators effectively and help achieve the political commitments. We refer to article 15 of the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020 setting our parameters for the GCM: that it is convened, hosted and led by WHO and reports to the WHO governing bodies and that it respects the governing principle that the primary role and responsibility for preventing and controlling non-communicable diseases lie with governments.

Any mechanism that includes WHO, Member States and the private sector must operate within the WHO guidelines on conflict of interest, as endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2010. Additionally, it is recommended to develop an ethical framework, a code of conduct for all sectors to comply with, and firewalling policy development from the private sector.

3 (b) - Health on the United Nations post-2015 Development Agenda

The absence of CVD and other NCDs from the original Millennium Development Goals led to, in our view, great suffering and avoidable death.

The political declaration of the High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of NCDs acknowledged that "... the global burden and threat of non-communicable diseases constitutes one of the major challenges for development in the twenty-first century. These diseases undermine social and economic development throughout the world, and threaten the achievement of internationally agreed development goals."

Now is the time to ensure that the post-2015 development framework includes and prioritises the prevention and control of CVD and other NCDs. An overarching health goal should not place health challenges in competition with one another, and should support the creation of environments that facilitates health and wellbeing for all. Healthy life expectancy is a vital and equitable approach, and universal health coverage could be the enabler to achieving such a goal.