

Political Declaration of the UN High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs): Key Points

Background Heads of State and Government and representatives assembled at the United Nations from 19 to 20 September 2011 for a High-level Meeting on the prevention and control of NCDs, with a focus on developmental and other challenges and social and economic impacts of NCDs, particularly for developing countries.

The NCD crisis

- NCDs undermine social and economic development throughout the world, threaten the achievement of internationally agreed development goals and increase inequalities between countries and populations and must occupy the attention of the international community and international cooperation

A challenge of epidemic proportions

- 36 million global deaths are due to NCDs, principally heart disease, stroke, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes, including about 9 million deaths before the age of 60, with nearly 80% of those deaths occurred in developing countries
- Mental, neurological, renal, oral and eye disorders are recognized as an important cause of morbidity
- The most prominent NCDs are linked to four common risk factors: tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, an unhealthy diet, and lack of physical activity
- NCDs and their risk factors worsen poverty, while poverty contributes to rising rates of NCDs and may impact negatively on the achievement of the MDGs
- Maternal and child health is inextricably linked with NCDs and their risk factors
- The economic, social, gender, political, behavioral and environmental determinants of health contribute to the rising incidence of NCDs.

Responding to the challenge

- Prevention, including exposure to the risk factors, must be the cornerstone of the global response to NCDs
- Effective NCD prevention and control requires leadership, whole-of-government approaches and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders
- Resources devoted to combating the challenges posed by NCDs at the national, regional and international levels are not commensurate with the burden
- There is a fundamental conflict of interest between the tobacco industry and public health

Recognising that NCDs can be prevented and their impacts significantly reduced, with millions of lives saved, Heads of State and Government commit to five broad areas of action:

Reduce risk factors

- Implement multisectoral, cost-effective, population-wide interventions to reduce the common NCD risk factors
- Accelerate implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, and note that price and tax measures are an effective and important means of reducing tobacco consumption
- Advance the implementation of the WHO Global Strategies on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, and to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol, and promote the WHO recommendations on the marketing of foods and beverages to children
- Promote cost-effective interventions to reduce salt, sugar and saturated fats, and eliminate industrially produced trans-fats in foods
- Promote increased access to cost-effective vaccinations to prevent infections associated with cancers, and increased access to cost-effective cancer screening programmes

- Private sector called upon to reduce the impact of marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children, reformulate products to provide healthier options, create an enabling environment for healthy behaviours among workers, improve access and affordability for medicines
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Strengthen national policies and health systems

- Support and strengthen, by 2013, as appropriate, multisectoral national policies and plans for the prevention and control of NCDs
 - Strengthen and integrate NCD policies and programmes into health planning processes and the national development agenda of each Member State
 - Identify and mobilize adequate, predictable and sustained resources, through domestic, bilateral, regional and multilateral channels, and innovative financing mechanisms
 - Promote production, training, and retention of health workers
 - Promote increased access to affordable, safe, effective and quality medicines and diagnostics and other technologies, including through the full use of TRIPS flexibilities
 - Strengthen health-care infrastructure, including procurement and distribution of medicines
 - Recognize the importance of universal coverage in national health systems, especially through primary health-care and social protection mechanisms
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International co-operation (including collaborative partnerships)

- Strengthen and support national, regional, and global plans for prevention and control of NCDs
 - Call upon WHO and all other relevant UN system agencies, funds and programmes, international financial institutions, development banks, and other key international organizations to work together in a coordinated manner to support national efforts to prevent and control NCDs.
 - Urge continued technical assistance and capacity building to developing countries, especially to the least developed countries, in the areas of NCDs and promotion of access to medicines for all
 - Foster partnerships between Government and civil society; promote capacity building of NGOs
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Research and development

- Promote investment in quality research and development, for all aspects related to the prevention and control of NCDs in a sustainable and cost-effective manner
 - Promote the use of information and communications technology
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Monitoring and evaluation

- Call upon WHO, with Member States, and UN agencies, funds and programmes, and other regional and international organizations, to develop before the end of 2012, a comprehensive global monitoring framework, including a set of indicators, capable of application across regional and country settings, to monitor trends and to assess progress made in the implementation of national strategies and plans on NCDs
 - Call upon WHO, with Member States, through the governing bodies of the WHO, and with UN agencies, funds and programmes, and other relevant regional and international organizations, building on the work already underway, to prepare recommendations for a set of voluntary global targets for the prevention and control of NCDs, before the end of 2012
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Follow-up

- The Secretary-General, in close collaboration with the Director-General of WHO, and in consultation with Member States, UN funds and programmes and other international organizations, to submit by the end of 2012 to the 67th General Assembly, for consideration by Member States, options for strengthening and facilitating multisectoral action for the prevention and control of NCDs through effective partnership
 - The Secretary-General, in collaboration with Member States, the WHO, and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the UN system to present to the General Assembly, during the 68th session, a report on the progress achieved in realizing the commitments made in this Political Declaration, including on the progress of multisectoral action, and the impact on the achievement of the IADGs, including the MDGs, in preparation for a comprehensive review and assessment in 2014 of the progress achieved in the prevention and control of NCDs
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