



# Multisectoral action for NCD prevention and control– Why?

The causes of NCDs are complex and encompass not only individual-level factors but also societal factors. The key risk factors, including tobacco and alcohol use, unhealthy diet, and physical inactivity, are strongly determined by the prevailing social, legal, economic and environmental context – for example, the pervasive marketing of processed foods and sugary beverages to children and youth, alcohol advertising, limited walking spaces or parks in urban areas, and the lack of access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Effective NCD prevention and control therefore requires influencing public policies in sectors outside health rather than by making changes in health policies alone.

The United Nations convened a high-level meeting on NCDs in New York in September 2011, which was attended by Heads of State or their representatives from 113 countries. Acknowledging the need for multisectoral and multistakeholder action for NCD prevention and control, the Political Declaration adopted by the UN High-level Meeting called for “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” responses, which entails influencing public health policy by engaging multiple government ministries across sectors such as health, education, energy, agriculture, sports, transport, communication, urban planning, environment, labour, employment, industry, trade and finance, as well as all relevant stakeholders in society, including individuals, families, communities, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, academia, media and, where and as appropriate, the private sector. Wide-scale implementation of multisectoral policies will require strong political will and commitment from top leadership of countries.



