

The NCD Alliance

Putting non-communicable diseases
on the global agenda

NCD Alliance Submission - Draft terms of reference for United Nations Interagency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs, 11 November 2013

The NCD Alliance welcomes the formalisation of the UN Interagency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs at ECOSOC in July 2013, and acknowledges the work undertaken thus far to develop a terms of reference (ToRs) and a division of tasks and responsibilities.¹ Through clear terms of reference, this Task Force has the potential to facilitate UN-wide coordination and action on NCDs for the first time. Drawing upon the lessons learned from existing UN interagency networks and task forces (most notably tobacco control, gender and violence against women), it will be an important mechanism to harness the resources, expertise and capacity of all relevant UN agencies, programmes and funds to “deliver as one” on NCDs, from global to country level.

Drawing upon the experience of the UNAIDS Division of Labour (DoL), a well structured division of tasks and responsibilities will provide a clear political mandate for UN agencies on NCDs, based on their comparative advantage and technical competencies, and encourage efficiency and harmonisation across the UN system on NCDs.

Below are the NCD Alliance’s detailed recommendations on the a) terms of reference and b) division of tasks and responsibilities outlined in the 11 October WHO Discussion Paper:

A) TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE UN TASK FORCE

Purpose of the Task Force (p 3):

- **Alignment across the global NCD architecture:** Commend alignment of the purpose and objectives of the Task Force with the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020, and of the activities of the Task Force with those of the global coordination mechanism (GCM) for NCDs. All elements of the global NCD architecture must be harmonised and coordinated.

Objectives of the Task Force (p4):

The NCD Alliance broadly agrees with the objectives outlined. Specifically, we make the following points:

- **Joint programming:** Support the objective on joint programming on NCDs. This is an area that the UN Task Force on Violence against Women (VAW) has been effective, with joint programming in 10 countries aimed at harmonisation of VAW initiatives and budgets, and maximisation of each stakeholder’s comparative advantage². Recommend two points:
 - **Engage NCD NGOs and alliances in joint programming:** The joint programming initiatives of the Task Force on VAW involve NGOs at all levels. For example, multi-stakeholder joint committees have been established to help coordinate and provide technical support. The joint programmes of the UN Task Force on NCDs must engage NCD NGOs at both global and national levels.
 - **Produce guidelines on joint programming:** Drawing from the UN Task Force on VAW experience, the Task Force for NCDs should complete and disseminate a manual/guidelines on joint programming on NCDs for use by UN Country Teams at the country level. Capacity development should be a central component of the work of the UN Task Force, particularly focusing on UN Country Teams and NCD focal points within UN agencies.
- **Integrating NCDs into other political processes:** Add an objective on working jointly in applying NCD perspectives to the deliberations of relevant political processes, as well as supporting implementation of NCD-related recommendations and commitments emanating from other UN General Assembly special

¹ Per WHA66.10

² http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/vaw/joint_programming_initiative.pdf

sessions, conferences and summits. This is an area the UN Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality has been effective. For example, the UN Task Force could identify entry points and coordinate UN system engagement for NCDs in processes such as the Busan Partnership on Aid Effectiveness, the sustainable development and post-2015 processes, and the UN High Level Review and Assessment on NCDs in 2014.

- **Resource mobilisation:** Welcome the inclusion of resource mobilisation for the implementation of activities and joint programmes in the objectives. Adequate and sustainable funding for implementing Task Force initiatives is critical to its long-term success. Recommend the Task Force consider the establishment of a Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) for NCDs, as previously noted in a Task Force report³. The UN Interagency Task Force on VAW established a UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women in 1996 as a funding mechanism for VAW, with lessons learned incorporated into the work of the Task Force. UNDP, on behalf of UN organisations, administer many MPTF's already, as they constitute a flexible and efficient mechanism for mobilising funding resources and for providing predictable funding for achieving national and global priorities.
- **Tobacco control:** Welcome the prioritisation of tobacco control and the implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) as a central objective of the Task Force. As the Task Force expanded the mandate of the UN Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control, maintaining the centrality of this issue and the FCTC is important.

Members of the Task Force (p4):

- Support the proposed language on membership of the Task Force as UN system agencies, funds, and programmes, the international financial institutions, development banks and other key intergovernmental organisations. It is important international financial institutions such as the World Bank, and key intergovernmental organisations such as IDLO, are included alongside UN agencies, funds and programmes.
- As a matter of principle, all members of the UN Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control should become members of the UN Task Force on NCDs. Currently, the following members of the former UN Task Force on Tobacco Control are absent from the division of tasks and responsibilities: [ICAO, IMF, UNPFII, UNESCO, UN-WOMEN, UNODC, UNFIP, WCO]
- Recommend high-level participation from all members of the UN Task Force. For example, the annual meetings of the UN Interagency Network on Women and Gender Equality include heads of agencies.
- Although NGO's will not be members of the Task Force, strongly recommend NGOs are recognised as key implementing partners in the activities of the Task Force, at both global and country level. This could be operationalised by establishing committees or working groups with meaningful participation of NGOs, to support the work of the Task Force globally or in joint programming initiatives at the national level. The NCD Alliance and our partners stand ready to support the work of the Task Force.

Responsibilities of members of the Task Force (p5):

- Strongly support the point on guidance to mobilise non-health sectors and mitigation of their impact in this section.
- Recommend adding a responsibility on securing leadership by senior official of entities of the UN system to address NCDs⁴.

³ Fourth Meeting of UN Funds, Programmes and Agencies on the Implementation of the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of NCDs (Vienna, 11-12 December 2012

http://www.who.int/nmh/events/2013/4th_meeting.pdf

⁴ This is one of the objectives of the UN TF on VAW: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/tf_vaw.htm#2

Responsibilities of the Secretariat (p6):

- Agree with WHO providing the secretariat for the Task Force. As both the secretariat for the Task Force and the global coordination mechanism (GCM) will be housed in WHO NMH Cluster, recommend clarification of different roles and functions.
- Support the responsibility to develop an online inventory of commitments and activities of members of the UN Task Force, as developed by the UN Task Force on VAW⁵.
- Add responsibility for the secretariat on identifying opportunities for the UN Task Force to engage and respond to relevant UN processes and sessions for NCDs (as per the NCD Alliance's recommended additional objective).

Accountability (p6):

- Encourage reporting of the Task Force to ECOSOC through the Secretary-General to include broader updates of the activities of the GCM, including how the Task Force is engaging with the GCM.

Conflict of Interest (p6-7):

- Welcome the Secretariat as the focal point for conflict of interest (COI) issues and to provide a platform to actively engage members of the Task Force in responding to and managing real, perceived, and potential conflicts of interest.
- Recommend revising paragraph 24 to include language on due diligence, active risk management, and a clear and coherent approach to conflicts of interest.

Links with global coordination mechanism (p7):

- Welcome active participation of Task Force in the GCM through its ECOSOC mandate. In addition, strongly encourage individual members of the Task Force to engage as active members in the GCM in their own right.

B) DIVISION OF TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of convening institutions (p7):

Propose the following amendments/additions to the responsibilities:

- Edit *"To lead advocacy and communication on the prevention and control of NCDs across the UN system, in line with WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020"* to *"To ensure leadership, advocacy, coordination and consultation under the designated area of responsibility, in line with WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020."*
- Add *"provide the managerial and human resources required to convene the suggested area of work";*
- Add *"coordinate and lead the generation of the development and dissemination of strategic information on the suggested area of work";*
- Add *"coordinate and facilitate transparent and meaningful engagement with international partners, including NGOs, academia and the private sector, as appropriate, in the respective area of work".*

Responsibilities of partnering institutions (p8):

Propose the following additions to the proposed responsibilities:

- Add *"collaborate on setting standards, policy development, planning, and programming";*

⁵[http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/documents/Consolidated%20Inventory%20of%20UN%20activities%20on%20vaw%20\(October%20202009\).pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/documents/Consolidated%20Inventory%20of%20UN%20activities%20on%20vaw%20(October%20202009).pdf)

- Add *“build awareness, support and ownership, and stimulate demand for appropriate responses”*;
- Add *“mobilise and strengthen partnerships (brokering and capacity-building) in the respective area of work”*;
- Add *“support convening institutions in their engagement with international partners such as NGOs, academia and private sector entities in the respective area of work”*.

Draft division of tasks and responsibilities (p9-11)

The NCD Alliance supports the alignment of the Task Force work areas with the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020. Ordering the division of task and responsibilities (DoTR) by the GAP objectives will encourage greater collaboration across multiple UN agencies, rather than unilateral or bilateral activity on NCDs.

The DoTR must be flexible and allow for differentiation at the country level. National ownership and country priorities should be the overarching rubric for harmonisation and alignment, under which the DoL coordination should occur, in the spirit of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. UN coordination at country level is critical, and will depend on individual country contexts – for example the in-country presence of different agencies; the comparative advantage and core mandates of different agencies; and the availability of funding for different priorities at country level.

Recommend the DoTR is an iterative document, periodically reviewed, updated and reported on to ECOSOC – as part of the Task Force work plan.

The NCD Alliance makes the following specific points to further strengthen the DoTR:

- Add a short rationale/description of why respective agencies are working in each area – establishing a link between their mandate and their engagement on NCDs in the IATF as is done in the UNAIDS Division of Labour (DoL)⁶.
- A number of UN agencies listed in appendix 4 of the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020 are absent from the current DoTRs – for example UNESCO, UNECE, UNRWA, UNOSDP, UN Women, UNODC, INCB. We strongly encourage the inclusion of these UN agencies in the DoTR, as their mandates are clearly aligned with specific work areas. For example. UNESCO under 3.8, UN WOMEN under 3.5, UNOSDP under 3.3 etc.
- Add area of work under objective 4 on training of healthcare workers (links with actions for international partners 49 (b)).
- Add an additional point under objective 4 on palliative care (links with actions for international partners 47 (c) with WHO, UNODC/INCB as partner institutions).

⁶http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/unaidspublication/2011/JC2063_DivisionOfLabour_en.pdf