Key mission findings

1. Paraguay is well placed to move forward on NCDs, with strong political commitment across all government departments.

2. National Action Plan is in place, but cancer prevention and control needs to be incorporated into the national NCD agenda.

3. Paraguay is initiating a comprehensive approach to tackle NCD risk factors; there is some progress especially on tobacco control via new anti-tobacco law which has the potential to allow implementation of the WHO FCTC. There remain challenges with regards to harmful use of alcohol and it is clear that alcohol is strongly linked with road traffic incidents and violence in Paraguay.

4. The UNCT has started mapping current NCD activities and is keen to provide coordinated technical assistance to support the Government.

5. The health system is fragmented with challenges in the availability of diagnostic, treatment and rehabilitation services. However, the Ministry of Health is investing in strengthening primary health care for NCD management, with a focus on improving diabetes care.

6. Bolder policies and regulatory measures are needed to reduce avoidable premature mortality and reduce the economic, social and public health threat of NCDs in Paraguay.

7. Bolder measures are needed to meet the NCD-relevant SDG targets and to ensure that public health policies are protected from undue influence by any form of commercial interests.

“I am committed to seeing an effective response to NCDs across the government and I am pleased that we have the National Action Plan. We now need to turn this into action so that we can reduce the scourge of heart disease, diabetes and cancer in Paraguay. The findings of the Mission will help focus our response. The commitment of the UN to support us in the months ahead is very welcome.”

Dr Antonio C. Barrios, Minister of Health of Paraguay

Key adult NCD mortality and risk factors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probability of premature mortality from NCDs: 18% (2015)</th>
<th>25% of adults are insufficiently physically active (2010)</th>
<th>7% of adults have raised fasting blood glucose (2014)</th>
<th>25% of adult men and 18% of adult women have raised blood pressure (2015)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28% of men (aged &gt;=15 years) smoke tobacco (2015)</td>
<td>15% of adult men and 22% of adult women are obese (2014)</td>
<td>Pure alcohol per capita consumption: 9.6 litres per year (population 15+, 2015)</td>
<td>85% of adults eat insufficient amounts of fruits vegetables (STEPS, 2011)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Updated: April 2017
**Key recommendations**

1. An Interministerial Group should be formed by a Presidential decree to drive forward the implementation of the NCD Action Plan.

2. A high level national coordination mechanism needs to be established to harness the collective efforts of government at all levels, of international partners and non-State actors based in Paraguay in the prevention and control of NCDs.

3. The costing of the NCD plan is needed, and a business case needs to be established for the Government of Paraguay to invest more in NCDs.


5. Ensure that tobacco law is implemented and that taxes go to NCD programmes in accordance with the new tobacco law.

6. A year on year increase in excise tax on alcoholic beverages is recommended. The laws and rules that regulate availability of alcohol and its advertising need to be enforced.

7. Approve the nutrition bill and expand healthy food options in schools, workplaces and communities.


**Adding value: actions taken following the mission**

1. Tobacco law passed and regulation is in process.

2. Costing of the NCD action plan is in process led by the World Bank. Results expected in summer 2017.

3. Alcohol reduction sensitization workshop was held with health policy makers.

4. Childhood obesity prevention project was developed for implementation in first trimester 2017.

5. Diabetes quality of care project is being implemented in primary care centres throughout the country.

6. UNCT organized joint activities on World Health Day 2016 to mobilize community efforts on NCD prevention and control, with a focus on diabetes.

7. Road safety education campaign has been developed and its launching is in process.

8. Publications on road safety developed: "Drinking and Driving", "Motorcycles and the Use of Helmets" and "Speed and Road Accidents".

9. Global School Health Survey (GSHS) is underway, with NCD risk factors included.

10. Plans are now in place to undertake the second STEPS survey once funding is secured.

**Next steps**

1. UNCT to continue discussions on NCDs with the Ministry of Health to agree further support from UN agencies.

2. Recruitment of an NCD focal point in the PAHO/WHO Country Office to provide technical assistance on NCDs and catalyse multisectoral action.

3. Continue to implement the diabetes project, road safety campaign, and childhood obesity project.

4. Finalize costing of the NCD Plan of Action.

5. Mobilize funding to carry out the STEPS survey.

*We are committed to supporting the government in implementing its NCD action plan in order to reduce the number of people dying prematurely from NCDs. Strengthening the health care system to ensure people with NCDs receive effective care is crucial and WHO is committed to providing support to the Government in this area."

Dr Carlos Castillo Solorzano, WHO Representative in Paraguay

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*All data are WHO crude country comparable estimates, WHO Global Health Observatory, who.int/gho/ncd/en. Accessed 25/4/2017, with the exception of data for fruit and vegetables which comes from Paraguay National STEPS Survey, 2011.

Additional information on the status of NCDs in Paraguay can be found on the WHO NCD DataFinder app.