Key mission findings

1. The forces of globalization, urbanisation and population ageing are contributing to the rise in tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity in Zambia. As a result, Zambia is seeing an epidemic of NCDs and now has a double burden of communicable diseases and noncommunicable diseases.

2. Road traffic injuries and their associated impacts constitute an important health and development challenge in Zambia. Road crashes are the third leading cause of death in Zambia, after malaria and HIV/AIDS.

3. The Government plans to update the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan on NCDs and their risk factors in 2017. The new plan will be multi-sectoral and fully costed.

4. The United Nations Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Team have prioritized NCDs and are committed to providing support to the Government in reviewing the current NCD plan, establishing a national NCD coordination mechanism, developing the business case for NCDs and engaging development partners to support the national NCD response.

5. The draft UN Development Partnership Framework for 2016-2021 includes NCD-related SDGs.

6. While policies are often in place, they are not fully translated into action. This is primarily due to the lack of enforcing relevant policies and laws.

Key recommendations

1. A national NCD coordinating committee (or equivalent) with membership by all ministries and chaired at the senior level (e.g. Vice President) should be established, with a subcommittee that provides a coordination platform for civil society, NGOs and academia.

2. The new national multi-sectoral NCD Action Plan for 2017-2021 should be developed with full participation of non-health ministries and non-State actors. The plan should prioritise

"We are seeing that noncommunicable diseases are no longer a problem for older generations – the rising incidence of obesity, overweight and diabetes, particularly among the young is testament to that"

Mrs Janet Rogan, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Zambia

Key adult NCD mortality and risk factors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probability of premature mortality from NCDs</td>
<td>17% (2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27% of men (aged &gt;=15 years) smoke tobacco</td>
<td>(2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18% of adults are insufficiently physically active</td>
<td>(2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4% of adults have raised fasting blood glucose</td>
<td>(2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4% of adult men and 14% of adult women are obese</td>
<td>(2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pure alcohol per capita consumption</td>
<td>4.0 litres per year (population 15+, 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21% of adult men and 18% of adult women have raised blood pressure</td>
<td>(2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97% of adults eat insufficient amounts of fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>(STEPS, 2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a small number of highly cost-effective, evidence-based and feasible interventions. An NCD communication strategy to support the Action Plan should also be developed and implemented.

3. An investment case should be undertaken to show the burden of NCDs (with special focus on tobacco use effects).

4. A country wide STEPS Survey should be conducted and finalised in 2017.

5. Prevention of NCDs should be a core part of the school curriculum.

6. The Tobacco Control Law (initially proposed in 2010) should be finalised and submitted to the National Assembly for adoption in 2017.

7. Excise tax on tobacco products should be increased year on year in order to reach the recommended level of at least 70% of the retail package price. Other measures in line with the provisions of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which was ratified by Zambia in 2008, should also be enforced.

8. The Comprehensive Bill on Alcohol should be developed and submitted to Parliament as soon as possible.

9. The Government should develop and introduce a food safety bill to Parliament in 2017-2018 to promote reformulation of foods and meals to contain less sugar, salt and unhealthy fats.

10. Raise awareness around physical activity and implement interventions that make physical activity easy and safe.

11. Review the status of implementation of the current national road safety strategy and strengthen its implementation. Consider drawing on WHO’s Save lives: a road safety technical package.

Adding value: actions taken following the mission

1. A whole-of-government Multisectoral Committee on the Implementation of the WHO-FCTC was formed in April 2017 to mainstream tobacco control policies across Government.

2. Efforts are being made to strengthen the Tobacco Products Bill in line with the WHO FCTC.

3. The University of Zambia has conducted a survey amongst tobacco farmers which concluded that most farmers are exploited by the industry in what they termed as “Modern Day Slavery”.

4. The January 2017 Finance Act is resulting in a move from ad valorem to specific taxation for tobacco in line with Article 6 of the WHO FCTC.

5. A National Health Week has been introduced. This year, its first, focussed on promoting physical activity, healthy eating and early detection of disease. The campaign was led by the President and the First Lady, along with Provincial Ministers.

6. Two large hospitals in Lusaka have introduced health and well-being activities for their staff.

7. The Ministry of Health has acquired free national radio and TV broadcasting time for 2017 to raise the profile of NCDs.

8. Heightened political will on the need for relevant Government Ministries to take action in mitigating access, availability, affordability and impact of harmful use of alcohol. The Final Draft National Alcohol Policy is awaiting presentation to Cabinet.

9. The Ministry of Health is developing the Alcohol and Drug Abuse De-addiction programme.

10. The 2016 HIV treatment guidelines launched in December 2016 include NCD management in ART clinics with the necessary training conducted.

11. Plans now fully underway for the 2017 STEPS survey.

12. A national NCD mobile phone survey with support of the Bloomberg Data for Health Initiative is under way.

13. The National Food and Nutrition Commission in conjunction with Ministry of Health have engaged a team of experts to explore regulations, laws and multisectoral policies that have the potential to improve nutrition across Zambia.

14. Ministry of Health has conducted trauma management training in two districts.

Next steps

1. Establish a high level national NCD committee (or equivalent) with membership from all ministries, chaired at the senior level (e.g. Vice President) with a coordinating committee that provides a coordination platform for civil society, NGOs and academia.

2. Need to strengthen enforcement of tobacco and alcohol control legislation and regulation.


4. Recruit a WHO-funded nutrition officer in the Ministry of Health to focus on NCDs.

5. NCD strategic plan to be finalised once STEPS survey is completed.

6. Identify a national consultant to drive forward recommendations of the Joint Mission.

7. Food Safety Act to be developed and introduced by the end of 2017.

8. Government to agree a mechanism for a percentage of profits from breweries to be used for rehabilitating alcohol and drug addicted patients.


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