Belarus

NCD Joint programming mission, 14-18 July 2014
Investment case mission, 26-30 September 2016

Key mission findings

1. The high burden and mortality from NCDs presents particular challenges for the health care delivery system and multiple opportunities for action.

2. Ministries appear to better understand their roles and responsibilities in tackling NCDs, and the contours of a whole-of-government response to the ongoing NCD crisis are being drawn up.

3. The government is addressing the social determinants of ill-health by implementing programmes such as: (a) a comprehensive youth policy that addresses health and social needs from age 0 to 31 years; (b) employment schemes to limit the impact of unemployment and reduce poverty; (c) providing financial protection from catastrophic costs of health care; and (d) support to the unemployed in finding new jobs.

4. The lack of a more forceful approach to the implementation of policies to control prices, marketing and social norms around smoking, along with socially unfavourable choices made between business and public health interests, are contributing to high levels of premature deaths.

5. Alcohol consumption in Belarus, though there are signs of improvement, is a significant public health problem.

6. Certain unhealthy components of foods (e.g. trans-fats, saturated fats) present an opportunity for product reformulation and for raising awareness among concerned populations.

7. The UN Country Team is starting to work as one to support government’s efforts to control NCDs.

8. There are a small number independent NGOs active on NCDs-related issues.

“The recommendations of the Joint UN Task Force are very useful for Ministry of Health as they greatly help us to build arguments in our communications with other sectors.”

Dr. Dmitrii Pinevich
First Deputy Minister of Health of Belarus

Key adult NCD mortality and risk factors*: NCDs are responsible for almost 90% of deaths in Belarus

- Probability of premature mortality from NCDs: 29% (2015)
- No data available for physical activity
- 9.5% of adults have raised fasting blood glucose (2014)
- 36% of adult men and 29% of adult women have raised blood pressure (2015)
- 46% of men and 11% of women (aged >=15 years) smoke tobacco (2015)
- 20% of adult men and 24% of adult women are obese (2014)
- Pure alcohol per capita consumption: 17.1 litres per year (population 15+, 2015)
- No data available for consumption of fruit and vegetables
Key recommendations

1. The new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) needs to include NCDs.

2. A WHO FCTC country needs assessment is urgently needed to address bottlenecks in tobacco control.

3. A STEPS survey needs to be carried out.

4. An inter-ministerial NCD group and national NCD coordination mechanism need to be established to enhance coordination within the government, and between the government, the UNCT, donor agencies and civil society.

5. Belarus may want to consider taking a leadership role in the Eurasian Economic Union to facilitate the introduction of progressive fiscal and legislative instruments for tackling the NCD risk factors.


7. An economic case for investing in NCDs needs to be undertaken.

Adding value: actions taken following the mission

1. NCDs have been included in UNDAF, signed in November 2015.

2. UN agencies have increased collaboration on NCDs, and NCDs are now on the agenda of the UNCT Thematic Group on Health.

3. The Joint UN Task Force mission facilitated an inter-sectoral discussion with different stakeholders, including the Ministries of Economics and Finance.

4. Other relevant sectors have gained a better understanding of the challenges and/or impact of different policies on health outcomes and economic growth.

5. In 2015, a WHO FCTC needs assessment was carried out by the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC in collaboration with WHO/Europe, UNDP’s Regional Office in Istanbul and the Ministry of Health.

6. In 2016, a draft Presidential Decree on the State Regulation of Production, Circulation and Consumption of Tobacco Raw Materials and Tobacco Products, and the Production, Circulation and Use of Electronic Smoking Systems was developed, aimed at restricting smoking in public places and other measures, in line with the WHO FCTC.

7. A STEPS survey was started in October 2016, with the field work completed in March 2017. Comprehensive analyses of the STEPS survey will be available by May 2017.

8. A joint Government of Belarus (GoB)-WHO-UNDP team undertook the economic analysis and institutional context analysis in Belarus in September 2016, with the objective of developing an investment case for NCDs. The team consisted of economists, epidemiologists and social development experts.


10. In 2016, an Intersectoral Coordination Council on NCDs, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister, was established to oversee implementation of the State program.

Next steps

1. An investment case will be developed to guide multi-sectoral action on NCDs and risk factor reduction.

2. The STEPS survey will be completed in 2017. Comprehensive analyses of the STEPS survey will be available by May 2017.

3. A Presidential Decree on the State Regulation of Production, Circulation and Consumption of Tobacco Raw Materials and Tobacco Products, and the Production, Circulation and Use of Electronic Smoking Systems will be adopted.

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

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