Key mission findings

1. The sheer size and population of India, along with its diversity, rapid urbanization and changes in lifestyle, mean that responding to an issue as complex as NCDs is an enormous challenge. The task ahead should not be underestimated.

2. All government ministries have shown commitment and demonstrated leadership by adopting ten national NCD targets for 2025. India is the first country in the world to develop national targets aligned to the WHO voluntary global targets.

3. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has developed a National Multisectoral Action Plan but this has yet to be translated into action at national and state level.

4. While total health expenditure accounts for 4.2% of GDP, government expenditure is a little over 1%. This is grossly insufficient to support an effective NCD response.

5. Successes in tobacco control in various state initiatives have been due to: (a) strong tobacco control policy (and law); (b) the allocation of dedicated national funds to implement the tobacco control programme; (c) clear guidelines and advisories issued at the national level; (d) effective coordination mechanisms at state and district levels; (e) an active civil society movement; and (f) political leadership at the state and district level, including a commitment to policy enforcement.

“As most of the determinants that influence NCDs and their risks lie beyond the purview of the health sector, there is a need for coordinated, multi-sectoral action to create an enabling environment to promote healthy behaviours.”

Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh
Regional Director for WHO South-East Asia

“NCDs are the most challenging and most ambitious of our programmes. It’s really good to see that other ministries have given us their support. They are our partners and we need to make that partnership more effective on the ground.”

Lov Verma, Secretary
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

| Key adult NCD mortality and risk factors*: premature mortality and significant disability are preventing India from fulfilling its economic potential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Probability of premature mortality from NCDs: 23% (2015)** | **13% of adults are insufficiently physically active (2010)** | **8% of adults have raised fasting blood glucose (2014)** | **24% of adult men and 23% of adult women have raised blood pressure (2015)** |
| **20% of men (aged >= 15 years) smoke tobacco (2015)** | **2% of adult men and 6% of adult women are obese (2014)** | **Pure alcohol per capita consumption: 4.6 litres per year (population 15+, 2015)** | **No data available for consumption of fruit and vegetables** |
Key recommendations

1. The UN Country Team (UNCT), government and development partners need to: (a) support implementation of the National Multi-Sectoral Action Plan and focus on the most cost-effective interventions across all sectors; (b) work towards a rapid and very significant scale up of financial and human resources for the prevention and control of NCDs across the country; and (c) introduce monitoring and accountability mechanisms to track implementation of prevention and control measures.

2. Steps need to be taken to comprehensively implement WHO FCTC policies, including by increasing taxes on tobacco products, to build on gains made in tobacco control.

3. The UN Country Team needs to prioritize NCDs in its collective actions by, among others, establishing a strategic mechanism to support the government, and ensuring that each UN agency proactively engages with counterparts in key ministries.

Adding value: actions taken following the mission

1. The National Multisectoral Action Plan was developed and approved by all government ministries. 29 ministries nominated focal points to facilitate implementation of activities in their respective sectors. A national level meeting in 2016 sensitized policy makers from the states.

2. National consultations and state level workshops have advanced the understanding of the relationship between universal health coverage, NCDs and sustainable development; and contributed to development of indicators to monitor and evaluate key interventions.

3. The India UN Sustainable Development Framework, 2018-2022 is being developed. This is a valuable opportunity to integrate NCD goals and targets.

4. A mapping of civil society organizations has been conducted to understand current levels of engagement and scope for future collaboration in prevention and control of NCDs.

Next steps

1. National campaign for universal screening and management of three common cancers (cervical, breast, oral), hypertension and diabetes: preparatory work is underway, such as development of guidelines, manuals, and training of trainers. Rollout expected in the next two months.

2. Two rounds of training for state level capacity building for management of NCD programs will take place during 2017.

3. The UNCT will support the government in making the case for population-level interventions to reduce sodium intake and harmful use of alcohol.

4. The UNCT will support the government in developing a road map for alternative livelihoods for tobacco growers and bidi rollers.

5. Global Adult Tobacco Survey (Round 2): data collection completed. Data analysis and write-up are underway.

6. National NCD Risk Factor Survey: planning and preparatory activities, such as development of questionnaires and tools, are in progress. Data collection will start in mid-2017.

7. The 2017 NCD National capacity survey is underway.

“The Joint UN Task Force’s mission provided a unique opportunity for the government to identify the strategy for creating a ‘whole-of-government’ approach in the prevention and management of NCDs. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is systematically following up recommendations and actively engaged with other government departments, expert institutions and relevant stakeholders.”

Dr. Arun Panda, Additional Secretary
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare,
Government of India

*All data come from WHO crude country comparable estimates; WHO Global Health Observatory.
who.int/gho/ncd/en, Accessed 24/4/2017. Additional information on the status of NCDs in India can be found on the WHO NCD DataFinder app.

© World Health Organization 2017. All rights reserved.
WHO/NMH/NMA/17.82