Key mission findings

1. Ministries are increasingly concerned about NCDs, and recognize that they will have to assume greater responsibility for the prevention and control of NCDs.

2. Cross-government working groups on tobacco control and diabetes already exist, and new ones are being created to address hypertension and physical activity.

3. NCDs are well reflected in the National Medium Term Plan (2014-2018) and the National Health Sector Strategic Plan (2014-2018).


5. An Interagency Coordinating Committee for NCDs has recently been established.

6. NCDs are included in the 2014-2018 UNDAF for Kenya.

7. The multi-sectoral activities undertaken by the National Tobacco Control Unit and the National Tobacco Control Board are considered to reflect best practice.

8. NGOs can be further mobilized to promote awareness of NCDs, but first need to build their capacity and be better coordinated.

9. The private sector needs to be engaged effectively in support of the National NCD Strategy, particularly as over a third of Kenya’s health facilities are now operated by private sector companies.

Probability of premature mortality from NCDs: 18% (2015)

19% of adults are insufficiently physically active (2010)

4% of adults have raised fasting blood glucose (2014)

20.5% of adult men and 19% of adult women have raised blood pressure (2015)

25% of men (aged >= 15 years) smoke tobacco (2015)

3% of adult men and 11% of adult women are obese (2014)

Pure alcohol per capita consumption: 4 litres per year (population 15+, 2015)

94% of adults consume insufficient amounts of fruit and vegetables (STEPS, 2015)

“It’s the first time I’ve seen such a unique group coming together, working so cohesively.”

James Macharia
Kenya Cabinet Secretary for Health

“Strong partnerships across multiple government ministries, and between government, communities and the private sector, are absolutely essential. Prevention must be the cornerstone of the national response to NCDs. It is a practical possibility.”

Dr. Custodia Mandlhate
WHO Representative to Kenya
Adding value: actions taken following the mission

1. The National NCD Strategy (2015-2020) has been finalized and an NCD coordination mechanism launched.

2. High-level prioritization has been given to NCDs, with the First Lady of Kenya designated as Chairperson of the Forum of African First Ladies and Spouses against Breast, Cervical and Prostate Cancer from 2015 to 2016.

3. The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) executive summary for Kenya was published in November 2014 and the full report was published in 2016.

4. STEPS survey data collection was completed and now is being used to demonstrate the link between NCDs, poverty and socioeconomic development.

5. NCDs are now included in the National Health Insurance Fund, which has historically covered inpatient care. As of mid-2015, the fund also covers outpatient care (e.g. diabetes, hypertension and cancer).

6. A community health workers’ NCD training kit has been prepared and launched.

7. A National Physical Activity Action Plan is near final development.

8. An increasing number of partnerships have been created between the private sector, civil society organizations and community-based groups.

9. The “Healthy Heart Africa” campaign on hypertension awareness, screening and treatment was launched in partnership with Astra Zeneca and six local implementing partners.

10. Private-Public Partnerships on NCDs are gaining momentum, with four currently planned. Examples include: Novo Nordisk’s Base of the Pyramid project, the Novartis Access project and Path’s ‘No Empty Shelves’ project.

11. Resource mobilization campaigns on NCDs have been launched, e.g. the NCD Alliance/ Ministry of Health gala dinner.

12. The findings from the first wave of the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Policy Evaluation Project were released in December 2015.

13. Tobacco control regulations, including graphic health warnings, have been introduced and are in force; however the tobacco industry continues to scuttle the process.

14. An investment case for priority best buy interventions is currently being developed between the Ministry of Health, RTI and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington.

15. Private sector collaboration is being encouraged across the continuum, from NCD prevention and health promotion, through care and treatment policy, to palliation and rehabilitation.

16. Targeted NCD indicators will be integrated into Kenya’s existing health management information system platform.

Key recommendations

1. The government should place greater focus on premature deaths and on the most cost-effective, evidence-based and feasible interventions.

2. The draft National NCD Strategy needs to be finalized.

3. The government should develop a national strategy for physical activity.

4. The government needs to give higher priority to the prevention of cervical cancer, a major killer of women in Kenya.

5. A cross-government, costed NCD communications strategy should be developed.

6. The capacity of the NCD Department in the Ministry of Health needs to be strengthened.

7. An economic and investment case for the prevention and control of NCDs should be made to fast track government funding on NCDs.

8. Annual tax increases on tobacco products and alcohol should be introduced.

9. The STEPS Survey and Adult Tobacco Survey should be carried out without further delay.

“\textit{This Task Force mission has re-awakened us to the numerous avenues of support and collaboration within and outside the health sector in line with the multi-sectoral nature of NCDs.}”

James Macharia
Kenya Cabinet Secretary for Health

Next steps

1. Complete the NCD investment case.

2. Identify financing to support: (a) effective implementation of the national integrated NCD prevention and control strategy; (b) finalization and dissemination of draft policy documents, strategic plans, action plans and guidelines; (c) dissemination of STEPS survey results at county level; and (d) sensitization and capacity building in Kenya’s 47 counties.

*All data come from WHO crude country comparable estimates, WHO Global Health Observatory, who.int/gho/ncd/en, Accessed 31/3/2017, with the exception of data for consumption of fruit and vegetables, which comes from the Kenya STEPS survey, 2015.

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