**UN Interagency Task Force on NCDs works with Kyrgyzstan to reduce burden of noncommunicable diseases**

**17 March 2016:** The United Nations Interagency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) carried out a mission to Kyrgyzstan from 14 to 17 March 2016 to support the Government of Kyrgyzstan.

The mission was held to ensure the NCD-related targets set out in the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs) were included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in national development plans and policies, and to accelerate the implementation of national commitments on NCDs. These are included in the 2011 United Nations General Assembly Political Declaration on NCDs and the 2014 UN General Assembly Outcome Document on NCDs.

**NCDs cause 80% of deaths in Kyrgyzstan**

NCDs - principally cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases cause 80% of all deaths in Kyrgyzstan. Most worryingly, the probability of dying prematurely (i.e. before the age of 70 years) from NCDs in Kyrgyzstan in 28%, which means that nearly one of every three adult dies before they should.

“I invited the UN Task Force to Kyrgyzstan because I am absolutely committed to preventing premature deaths from NCDs in our population. The epidemic of NCDs is now one of our biggest socioeconomic issues”, said Dr Talantbek Batyralieev, Minister of Health of Kyrgyzstan. “We simply cannot afford the costs of people becoming ill from NCDs at such a young age. The support of the UN is crucial as we move ahead. But the support of civil society and professional organizations is important too.”, he added.

Dr Jarno Habicht, WHO Representative in Kyrgyzstan said, “We are committed to support the Government putting NCDs at the forefront of the national development agenda. We owe this to the country’s next generation. Kyrgyzstan recently celebrated its population reaching six million people and now is the right moment to ensure that our children grow up in an environment where they will not be at risk of dying from NCDs in their prime”, he added. “Every second death in Kyrgyzstan is from cardiovascular disease and 80% of these premature deaths can be prevented”, Dr Habicht emphasized.

**Action against NCDs is vital for development**

“Tackling NCDs is crucial for sustainable development and for ensuring that Kyrgyzstan reaches its full socioeconomic potential” said Mrs Yukie Mokuo, Acting UN Resident Coordinator and UNICEF Representative to Kyrgyzstan. “I am committed to ensuring that the UN Country Team here in Kyrgyzstan supports the Government in its multisectoral response to NCDs”, she highlighted.

“A multisectoral action requires whole-of-government and whole-of-society-approaches”, said Dr Nick Banatvala, WHO, Geneva who led the UN Task Force Mission in Kyrgyzstan, “If Kyrgyzstan is going to tackle the risk factors such as tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diet and poor nutrition, as well as physical inactivity then government ministries must come together and engage to ensure policy
coherence and mutual accountability of different spheres of policy making that have a bearing on NCDs”, he added.

**UN Taskforce encourages policy action on NCDs**

The mission welcomed a range of NCD policies and laws that Kyrgyzstan has in place, but warned the government that full implementation with strong enforcement is now required. This is especially so with regards tobacco, the harmful use of alcohol and unhealthy diet. The mission will be making a series of recommendations that encourage action in these and other key areas, alongside a commitment for the UN system to scale up its technical assistance to the Government and make its policy expertise available at all stages of implementation. The Government’s commitment to engage with all sectors of society, including civil society, to generate an effective national NCD response will usher a new era that will provide the greatest impact and efficiency.

The mission saw good examples of NCD care being provided in primary care in Bishkek and highlighted the need to roll out high quality primary care for patients with NCDs and at risk of NCDs throughout Kyrgyzstan. “We are committed to provide high quality health services to those with NCDs, with a focus on primary care”, added Dr Batyraliev.


The Mission met with ministers and senior officials from ministries of health, finance, economy, education and science, agriculture and others. The Mission also met with international development partners, as well as representatives of civil society, including NGOs and professional and academic associations.

The mission is optimistic that highlighting that Kyrgyzstan can rise to the challenge on NCDs. The recently 2015 WHO NCD Progress Monitor, scored countries against 18 specific targets on national NCD planning, surveillance, as well as policies in place for the prevention and management of NCD. According to the report, had fully met 8 of these 18 targets Kyrgyzstan and the joint mission believes that by 2018 more of these targets can be fully achieved.

**Notes**

1. According to a 2014 WHO publication, the probability of dying between ages 30 and 70 years from the 4 main NCDs is 28%. 49% of all deaths are from cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks and strokes. Cancers are responsible for 10% of all deaths.

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2. WHO estimates that 45% of men are tobacco smokers and the total alcohol intake per capita consumption is 6.7 litres of pure alcohol among men. Just under a third of adults have hypertension. Nearly one in 5 women are obese.

3. NCDs are now a central part to the international development agenda since UN General Assembly agreed the Sustainable Development Goals in New York in 2015. The UN and WHO has a set of blueprints for action which, if implemented, will reduce premature mortality for NCDs in all countries. These include the WHO Framework Convention for Tobacco Control, that Kyrgyzstan ratified in 2006 and the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs, 2013-2020.

4. The United Nations Interagency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases was established by the UN Secretary General in 2013 at the request of ECOSOC to provide technical support to Governments in tackling NCDs. The Task Force conducts missions to countries throughout the world and Kyrgyzstan is the second country that has received a mission in Europe.

5. The mission noted the increase in tobacco taxes and the recent implementation of pictorial warnings on cigarette packages but highlighted a range of additional actions required for there to be full implementation the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. These include a further increase in tobacco taxes (which a less than those in neighboring countries), a total ban on tobacco smoking in public places, raise awareness on tobacco harmful effects, and stricter control use of smokeless tobacco. The Mission also encouraged Kyrgyzstan, along with other countries in the region to accede to the FCTC Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products.

6. With regards harmful use of alcohol, the Mission highlighted the low price of alcohol retail outlets and the need for an increase in tax on alcohol products, bans on advertising and promotion, and regulating the availability of alcohol.

7. The joint mission also highlighted the importance of nutrition, highlighting both malnutrition as well as worrying levels of obesity. Urgent action is required to improve the proportion of the population eating a healthy diet.

8. The Mission saw some good example of NCD care being provided in primary care. It is important to build on these examples and roll high quality care for patients with NCDs and at risk of NCDs throughout primary care in Kyrgyzstan.

9. The Mission highlighted the need for the UN Country Team to ensure that NCDs are included into the next UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018-2022 which is under development and for the UN system to scale up coordinated support to the Government of Kyrgyzstan through a dedicated working group on NCDs.

10. Kyrgyzstan will report to the Third High-level Meeting on NCDs in 2018. In particular it will be invited to provide data for WHO to report on progress on a set of time bound commitments set out in the
Second High-level Meeting that was held in 2014 as well as on the 18 specific targets on national NCD planning, surveillance, as well as policies in place for the prevention and management of NCD.²

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