Towards implementation of UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/64/265
"Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases"

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1. What are non-communicable diseases?

The four types of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) -- cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes -- make the largest contribution to mortality in the majority of developing countries and economies in transition. These diseases are largely preventable by means of effective interventions that tackle four common modifiable risk factors, namely: tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol.

2. Why are non-communicable diseases a development issue?

NCDs are much more than a public health issue. They are a development issue because, on the "problem side" of the equation, NCDs and their risk factors are closely linked to poverty and contribute to underdevelopment and poverty, and on the "solution side" of the equation, gains can be achieved much more readily by influencing social and economic public policies in sectors outside health than by making changes in health policy alone, as follows:

- NCDs are a serious threat to the health of people in developing countries: 60% of all deaths in the world are due to NCDs. More than 80% of these deaths occur in developing countries and economies in transition. People living in these countries die much younger from NCDs than in developed economies: 90% of people who die from NCDs below the age of 60 live in developing countries and economies in transition,
and most of these deaths could have been prevented. The rising magnitude of NCDs impede the achievement of Millennium Goal 1 (Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty) and the health-related Goals (Reduce child mortality, Improve maternal health, and Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases).

- **NCDs are a threat to socio-economic development in developing countries:** At household level, there is now unequivocal evidence that NCDs cause poverty in developing countries and that poverty are caused by NCDs. NCDs and poverty form a vicious circle. The NCD epidemic is growing faster in the poorest developing countries. The poorest people are more likely to smoke and often spend more on tobacco than on education, health and clothing combined. Only 5% of the world population was covered by comprehensive smoke-laws in 2008. The costs of treating NCDs also create a poverty trap for the lowest income quintiles: Studies show that poor households face catastrophic health care expenditures for treatment of NCDs, which lock a substantial proportion of families into poverty. Loss of household income from poor physical status (e.g. limb amputations in diabetics) sinks poor households into even deeper poverty. And when money is tight, the first thing that drop out of the diet are usually the healthy foods, like fruits, vegetables, and lean sources of protein, which are nearly always more expensive. Processed foods, rich in fats and sugar and low in essential nutrients, become the cheapest way to fill a hungry stomach. At macro-economic level, the World Economic Forum, surveying the landscape of global risks for 2009 and 2010, ranked NCDs as the third most likely risk to come true and the fourth most severe in its impact. According to this report, NCDs were seen as a threat to global well-being, exceeded only by such threats as asset price collapse, spikes in oil and gas prices.

- **NCDs hold back the attainment of MDGs in developing countries:** Among women, NCDs are the second cause of death in low-income countries, and the first cause of death in middle-income countries. Twice as many women die from NCDs in Africa (per 1,000 adults) than in high-income countries alone. The NCD epidemic is projected to growth fastest in Africa over the next years. Evidence is emerging that a 1% reduction in the number of people infected with HIV or a 10% reduction in rate of deaths from NCDs in a population would have a similar impact on progress toward the tuberculosis MDG target as a rise in GDP corresponding to at least a decade of growth in low-income countries. This is consistent with other studies that link NCD with communicable diseases, maternal and child health, and nutritional conditions. The rise of NCDs also creates an enormous burden on health systems.

- **National policies in sectors other than health have a major bearing on the risk factors for NCDs:** Gains can be achieved much more readily by influencing public policies in sectors like agriculture, education, food production, pharmaceutical production, taxation, trade and urban development than by making changes in health policy alone.
3. **What is the focus of the NCD Summit 2011?**

The NCD Summit 2011, officially called the 'High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases' will take place in September 2011 in New York, as decided in the first operative paragraph of UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/64/265 adopted on 20 May 2010. The NCD Summit 2011 will be convened with the participation of Heads of State and Government.

It is expected that the NCD Summit 2011 will focus on galvanizing action at global and national levels to halt and address the health and socio-economic impact of NCDs through multi-sectoral approaches. It is expected that the Summit will also generate global commitment and momentum to implement the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases and its related Action Plan.

The tentative date penciled in for the NCD Summit is **Monday, 19 September 2011**. The exact dates, scope and purpose of the Summit is subject to approval by the UN General Assembly, following a process of consultations with Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

4. **What has led the UN General Assembly to convene the NCD Summit 2011?**

A chronological timeline of events leading to the adoption of UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/64/265 is as follows:

- **May 2000** - World Health Assembly endorses the 'Global strategy on the prevention and control of NCDs', providing a global vision for addressing non-communicable diseases.

- **September 2002** - World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg) adopts a 'Plan for Implementation', which calls for developing preventive and curative programmes to address NCDs and risk factors.

- **May 2003** - World Health Assembly endorses the 'WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control'.

- **May 2004** - World Health Assembly endorses the 'Global strategy on diet, physical activity and health'.

- **December 2006** - UN General Assembly adopts resolution A/RES/61/225, encouraging Member States to develop national policies for the prevention and control of diabetes.

- **September 2007** - Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of State and Government adopt a declaration on NCDs at a Regional Summit.
May 2008
- World Health Assembly endorses the 'Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of NCDs', which provides a roadmap for countries, WHO and international partners, and calls for action to raise the priority accorded to NCD in development work at global and national levels.

April 2009
- Preparatory ECOSOC/UNDESA/WHO Asia-Pacific Ministerial Meeting on Promoting Health Literacy calls on strategies for reducing NCDs risk factors aimed at providing and encouraging healthy choices for all.

May 2009
- Participants at the ECOSOC/UNESCWA/UNDESA/WHO Western Asia Ministerial Meeting on NCDs adopt the 'Doha Declaration on NCDs and Injuries', calling for indicators on NCDs to be included in the MDGs.

July 2009
- During the General Debate of the ECOSOC High-level Segment, national and international leaders called on global development initiatives to take into account the prevention and control of NCDs and suggested that the UN General Assembly convenes a High-level Meeting on NCDs. During the UNDESA/WHO Ministerial Roundtable Breakfast on NCDs, a number of countries tried to secure support to integrate indicators on NCDs into the core MDG monitoring and evaluation systems. The resulting ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration calls for urgent action to implement the 'Global strategy on the prevention and control of NCDs' and its related Action Plan.

November 2009
- The Commonwealth Heads of State and Government issued a statement on Commonwealth action to combat NCDs.

January 2010
- A drafting group led by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) convenes to develop a resolution on NCDs.

May 2010
- A/RES/64/265 is adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly. The resolution is co-sponsored by 78 countries, as well as Cameroon on behalf of the Member States who are Members of the Group of African States. OECD/DAC donor countries which co-sponsored the resolution include Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, UK and USA.
5. What else is stated in resolution A/RES/64/265 in terms of action to be taken?

United Nations resolutions are formal expressions of the opinion or will of United Nations organs. They generally consist of two clearly defined sections: a preamble and an operative part. The preamble of resolution A/RES/64/265 presents the considerations on the basis of which action is taken. The operative part of resolution A/RES/64/265 states the action to be taken. Resolution A/RES/64/265 contains four operative paragraphs, as follows:

OP1 - (NCD Summit 2011): "Decides to convene a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly in September 2011, with the participation of Heads of State and Government, on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases;"

OP2 - (Consultations leading up to the NCD Summit 2011): "Also decides to hold consultations on the scope, modalities, format and organization of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, with a view to concluding consultations, preferably before the end of 2010."

OP3 - (MDG Summit 2010): "Encourages Member States to include in their discussions at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the review of the Millennium Development Goals, to be held in September 2010, the rising incidence and the socio-economic impact of the high prevalence of non-communicable diseases worldwide."

OP4 - (SG report on NCDs): "Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session in collaboration with Member States, the World Health Organization and the relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, on the global status of non-communicable diseases, with a particular focus on the developmental challenges faced by developing countries."

6. What are WHO’s envisaged contributions to the preparations for the NCD Summit 2011?

The final outcome of the NCD Summit 2011 will be decided by Member States based on a process of consultation with Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

WHO is expected to support Member States, UN Regional Commissions, other UN Offices, Funds and Programmes, the World Bank and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, in holding consultations as part of the preparatory process for the Summit.
7. What are some of the key milestones between July 2010 and September 2011?

Q2/2010
- A preliminary draft 'modalities resolution' may be developed by the co-sponsors of resolution A/RES/64/265 and other Member States to define the scope, purpose, duration and expected outcomes of the NCD Summit 2011.

- WHO will finalize an analytical study on the relationship between NCDs, poverty and development, and will publish an Executive Summary in September 2010.

Q3/2010
- On the occasion of the MDG Summit (New York, 20-22 September 2010), a number of interested Member States will organize a side-event on NCDs on **Monday, 20 September 2010**, between 13:15 and 14:45 in UN Conference Room 7 NLB (new building) in New York in order to debate (1) the political and policy relevance of addressing NCDs in developing countries as a development issue; (2) the challenges and opportunities for integrating the prevention and control of NCDs in the development agenda and global and national levels, and (3) the collaboration required to assist Member States in preparing for the High-level Meeting in September 2011. The debate will serve to provide inputs to the preparations for the NCD Summit 2011, as well as the Summit itself.

- Co-sponsors of resolution A/RES/64/265 and other Member States may highlight the rising burden of NCDs and its socio-economic impact in their statements during the General Debate of the MDG Summit 2010.

- Co-facilitators will map out the consultation process for Member States and other relevant stakeholders.

- UN Regional Commissions may start holding regional consultations, as appropriate, which will serve to provide inputs to the preparations for the NCD Summit 2011, as well as the Summit itself. WHO will support these consultations.

- WHO will publish a 'Report on the Outcomes of the WHO Global Survey on Assessing National Capacity for NCD Prevention and Control'. The survey was completed during the first half of 2010 and contains responses from over 90 per cent of Member States.

- WHO will launch the 'Monograph on NCDs, poverty and development', a flagship report on the links between NCDs, poverty and development in developing countries.
Q4/2010  -  A final draft of the 'modalities resolution' is expected to be adopted by the UN General Assembly.

Q1/2011  -  WHO will launch the 'Global Status Report on NCDs', a flagship report with a particular focus on trends in respect of mortality, disease burden, risk factors, policies, plans, programmes, health services coverage, related costs, and quality of care.

Q2/2011  -  WHO may host, as part of the preparatory process for the NCD Summit, informal consultations with representatives of non-governmental organizations in official relations with WHO, civil society organizations and the private sector.

-  The Russian Federation will host, as part of the preparatory process for the NCD Summit 2011, the First Global Ministerial Conference on NCDs and Health Life-styles (dates to be determined). The Conference will serve to provide inputs to the preparations for the NCD Summit 2011, as well as the Summit itself.

-  The UN Secretary-General may submit to the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly a global status report on NCDs, with a particular focus on the developmental challenges faced by developing countries.

-  The co-facilitators may present a Zero Draft 'Outcome Document' in April-May 2011.


8. What will happen at the NCD Summit 2011 itself?

The NCD Summit 2011 will be held with the participation of Heads of State and Government. The President of the UN General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session and the President of the sixty-sixth session may jointly preside of the NCD Summit 2011.

It is envisaged that the Summit shall be composed of two plenary meetings (on the basis of two meetings per day), and two interactive round-table sessions to be held in concurrence with plenary meetings. The plenary meetings and the round-table sessions will be organized in accordance with the modalities set forth in the 'modalities resolution'. The round-table sessions will be co-chaired by Heads of State or Government and may have the overarching objective of raising the priority accorded to NCDs in development work at global and national levels, and may focus on themes ranging from addressing the developmental challenges faced by developing countries, identifying opportunities for
synergy with the MDGs, building innovative mechanisms for sustainable financing to widening and strengthening collaborative efforts and alliances.

It is envisaged that the NCD Summit 2011 will result in the adoption of a final 'Outcome Document'.

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**9. Where will WHO post new updates?**

Updates will be posted at [www.who.int/nmh/events/2011/ncd_summit](http://www.who.int/nmh/events/2011/ncd_summit).

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**10. Where do I find information about relevant past events?**

A list of relevant events, which took place in 2009 and 2010, is available at [www.who.int/nmh/events/2009](http://www.who.int/nmh/events/2009) and [www.who.int/nmh/events/2010](http://www.who.int/nmh/events/2010).
Acknowledgements

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Unless specified otherwise, the data contained in this information note is based on the 2004 Update of the Global Burden of Disease (WHO).