WHO Global Conference on how to enhance policy coherence between different spheres of policy-making that have a bearing on attaining SDG target 3.4 (NCDs) by 2030
(Montevideo, Uruguay, 18–20 October 2017)

The Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) presents her compliments to Member States and has the honour to invite them to the WHO Global Conference on how to enhance policy coherence between different spheres of policy-making that have a bearing on attaining SDG target 3.4 by 2030, which will be hosted by the President of Uruguay in Montevideo from 18 to 20 October 2017.

The current rate of decline in premature mortality from the four main noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) is insufficient to meet SDG target 3.4 (“By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from NCDs through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being”).

National policies in sectors other than health have a major bearing on premature mortality from NCDs. Health gains can be achieved much more readily by influencing public policies in sectors like agriculture, food production, pharmaceutical production, taxation, trade, and urban development than by making changes in health policy alone. One of the main obstacles at country level, however, is a lack of capacity to pursue policy coherence – across all sectors at all levels and by all actors – for reducing premature deaths from NCDs.

The goal of the Conference is, therefore, to highlight the critical links between reducing premature deaths from NCDs and enhancing policy coherence across areas that impact the governance, prevention, management and surveillance of NCDs.

The objectives of the Conference are:

– To provide guidance to Member States on how to reach SDG target 3.4 by 2030 by influencing public policies in sectors beyond health and enhancing policy coherence.
– To launch a set of new global initiatives which will help countries to accelerate their progress to date in reducing premature mortality from NCDs and fast track their efforts to attain SDG target 3.4.
– To exchange national experiences in enhancing policy coherence to attain the nine voluntary global NCD targets for 2025.
– To highlight the health sector as the key advocate for enhancing policy coherence for the attainment of SDG target 3.4.
The Conference will include the following three segments:

- Dialogue of Member States, United Nations organizations,¹ and non-State actors.²
- Ministerial Segment for Member States and United Nations Organizations at the level of Ministers and National NCD Directors.
- High-level Segment for Member States and United Nations Organizations at the level of Heads of State and Government and Heads of UN organizations.

The mandate for the Conference derives from action 1.3 included in the workplan of the WHO Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs 2016–2017,³ as well as the preparatory process leading to the third High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on NCDs in 2018.

The Conference is expected to result in a concise outcome document. It is expected that the outcome document will be endorsed by the participants of the Conference.

Member States are requested to nominate up to two representatives. Considering the theme of the Conference, it would be appreciated to have one nominee from the health sector, and one from a sector beyond health with a bearing on NCDs. The name(s) of the delegate(s) nominated should be sent by email to policycoherence2017@who.int by 31 May 2017. Upon receipt of the nominations, WHO will issue a personalized invitation letter.

To facilitate a wider participation in the Conference, and in accordance with resolution WHA50.1, special consideration will be given to delegates from countries which are classified as “least developed countries” by the United Nations. Depending on the availability of funds, every effort will be made by WHO and the Government of Uruguay to cover an economy class airfare by the most direct route to Montevideo, as well as accommodation including breakfast for the duration of the Conference for one delegate per least developed country. Member States who wish to ask for travel support should send an email to policycoherence2017@who.int as soon as possible, and no later than by 31 May 2017, including a copy of the letter from their government indicating the name, affiliation and contact details of the participant to be supported.

The participation of Member States is essential to the successful outcome of this important event. Interpretation will be provided in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish, and Russian during the plenary sessions.

On a separate but related note, the documentation for the Conference, including a conference brochure, programme structure, provisional agenda, policy briefs, organizational arrangements, and information on the process to develop a draft Montevideo Roadmap on NCDs 2018–2030, will be posted at www.who.int/montevideo2017 in due course.

The Director-General of the World Health Organization takes this opportunity to renew to Member States the assurance of her highest consideration.

GENEVA, 3 April 2017

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¹ These will include members of the United Inter-Agency Task Force on Noncommunicable Diseases.
² These will include participants of the WHO Global Coordination Mechanism on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, non-State actors in official relations with WHO, and other relevant NGOs, private sector entities, philanthropic foundations and academic institutions, in line with the WHO Framework for Engagement with non-State Actors.
³ See Action 1.3 in Annex 3 of document A68/11 available in six languages at http://apps.who.int/gb/e/e_wha68.html.