Co-Chairs’ Statement

WHO GCM/NCD Global Dialogue on the role of non-State actors in supporting Member States in their national efforts to tackle NCDs as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

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The 2016 Global Dialogue of the WHO Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs (WHO GCM/NCD) took place in a time of serious concern and great hope. Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are an increasingly visible part of the global sustainable development agenda, with broad recognition by governments and non-State actors alike that the prevention and control of NCDs and their risk factors is a critical part of improving health and wellbeing, eradicating extreme poverty worldwide, and creating conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained economic growth. Yet despite our continued political commitments, progress achieved at the national level since September 2011 remains insufficient, highly uneven, isolated, and, in many cases, ineffective.

Nearly three-quarters of all countries showed very poor or no progress in 2015 towards achieving the implementation of their time-bound commitment to address NCDs made at the United Nations General Assembly in 2011 and 2014. The current rate of decline in premature deaths from NCDs is insufficient to meet target 3.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals to, by 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from NCDs. This poses a particular challenge to low- and middle-income countries, where premature deaths strike hardest, and among populations already made vulnerable due to lack of equitable economic, social, and environmental development trends.

Reversing this troubling trend and meeting the NCD targets by 2025 and 2030 will result in millions of lives saved, untold suffering avoided, and improved financial stability at the country and household level. But progress cannot happen without multisectoral, multistakeholder participation and partnerships, and the actions, resources, knowledge, expertise, and services of non-State actors to complement the efforts of Governments.

We, the Co-Chairs of the WHO GCM/NCD Global Dialogue on the role of non-State actors in supporting Member States in their national efforts to tackle NCDs as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, call on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, philanthropic foundations, and academic institutions to invest in addressing NCDs in all countries as part of:

1) Supporting the realization of the commitments made by Heads of State and Government in the 2011 UN Political Declaration on NCDs;
2) Supporting the realization of the four time-bound commitments made by Ministers included in the 2014 UN Outcome Document on NCDs;
3) Supporting the achievement of the nine global NCD targets by 2025 (included in the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020);
4) Supporting the achievement of the NCD-related SDG targets by 2030 (included in the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development).

As countries continue to struggle to move from commitment to action, this Global Dialogue has reaffirmed the existence of numerous bottlenecks at the national level:

- A lack of policy expertise to facilitate the inclusion of NCDs as a matter of priority into national responses to the overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
– Unmet demands for technical assistance provided through bilateral and multilateral channels to strengthen national capacity, which would enable countries to develop their national multisectoral NCDs responses;
– A lack of change in the patterns of international development financing, where official development assistance is not commensurate with the scale of the NCD burden;
– Insufficient legal capacity to increase national taxes on health-harming products, in order to generate increased national revenue;
– Weak capacity of Ministries of Health (in the majority of developing countries) to exercise a strategic leadership and coordination role in policy development that engages all stakeholders across government in a multisectoral approach, NGOs, the private sector, and academic institutions ensuring that NCDs receive an appropriate, coordinated, comprehensive and integrated whole-of-society response;
– Industry interference that blocks development and implementation of certain measures;
– Food products consistent with a healthy diet are not affordable, accessible or available to the majority of communities in developing countries;
– Lack of access to affordable, quality, safe, and effective services, medicines, and technologies for NCDs, including in emergency settings;
– Lack of national capacity to assess the rationale, principles, benefits, and risks of engagement with non-State actors with a view to strengthen their contribution to national NCD responses.

We urge all stakeholders to act while taking into account different national realities, capacities, needs and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities, to ensure that no one is left behind.

WAY FORWARD

The era of empty rhetoric and inaction is over. We will collectively be held accountable by future generations for our ability to reverse the number of premature deaths caused by NCDs, prevent exposure to NCD risk factors, and to improve the lives of all people living with, at risk or affected by NCDs.

We therefore call on non-State actors to:

– Reject complacency in responding to the global NCD epidemic;
– Raise awareness about the national public health burdens caused by the toll of NCDs and their risk factors, in particular premature deaths from NCDs, and the relationship between NCDs, poverty and sustainable development.
– Recommit to raise awareness, advocate, and act to support countries in realizing the commitments to prevent and control NCDs made in 2011 and 2014, meeting the global NCD targets by 2025, and achieving the NCD-related SDG targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
– Pursue all necessary efforts to include NCDs in discussions on national SDG planning processes and integrate measures to address NCDs in national SDG responses.
– Reduce the persistent inequalities among countries in the probability of dying prematurely from NCDs, which remains unchanged five years after Heads of State and Government committed to a new, transformative agenda for NCDs.
– Fight for the rights of vulnerable populations at the margins of society, particularly those living with or affected by NCDs, in order to ensure all people are able to live healthy, dignified, prosperous and fulfilled lives;
– Protect present and future generations against the exposure to four common risk factors for NCDs, as well as the social, environmental, and economic determinants of health;
- Recognize the fundamental conflict of interest between the tobacco industry and public health;
- Protect public health policies for the prevention and control of NCDs from undue influence by any form of real, perceived or potential conflict of interest;
- Ensure the globalization of marketing and trade becomes a positive force for present and future generations;
- Support the implementation of, raise awareness of, and use the results from the operational global accountability mechanism for NCDs aimed at monitoring progress to fulfil the commitments in the 2011 UN Political Declaration on NCDs, to promote the use of the indicators established in the global accountability mechanism at national levels, and to contribute information on trends in NCDs according to the established indicators.
- Participate actively in the preparatory process leading to the third High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on NCDs in 2018 and in the meeting itself.

We specifically call on:

- **NGOs** to:
  - Encourage governments to develop ambitious national NCD responses as part of national SDG responses to the overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to participate in the planning and implementation as appropriate;
  - Forge multistakeholder partnerships and alliances that mobilize and share knowledge, good practices, and resources, to strengthen the coordination among NGOs,
  - Improve and scale up the effectiveness, contribution of and important role played by NGOs to provide services for the promotion, prevention, control, treatment and care, including palliative care, of NCDs and their risk factors;
  - Carry out regular and inclusive reviews of progress at national levels with a view to encourage a greater range of voices to be heard, particularly from those living with NCDs.
  - Amplify the voices of people living with and affected by NCDs.

- **The private sector**, ranging from microenterprises to cooperatives to multinationals, to:
  - Align core business practices with public health and sustainable development goals;
  - Implement the actions for the private sector included in relevant WHO global strategies, and in accordance with WHO norms, standards, and guidelines.
  - Encourage impact investing, which combines a return on investment with the impact on curbing the national burden of NCDs, mitigating their risk factors and contributing to national NCD targets.
  - Report contributions to NCD prevention and control in the most objective and independent verifiable way possible.

- **Philanthropic foundations** to:
  - Encourage the rapid growth of philanthropic giving and financial and non-financial contributions towards our common goals;
  - Mobilize additional funds through multistakeholder partnerships;
  - Increase cooperation between philanthropic actors.

- **Academic institutions** to:
  - Provide and facilitate credible, independent research aimed at enhancing data and evidence and improving the efficacy of policies, medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and technologies for NCDs, particularly in low- and middle-income countries;
  - Ensure the inclusion of NCDs as part of balanced curricula at medical schools and teaching institutions;
To this end, we call on international development donors to increase and sustain their investments in enhancing the capacity of relevant national NGOs to ensure their full and active participation in the development and implementation of national NCDs responses, including in the establishment of national multisectoral mechanisms for engagement, policy coherence and mutual accountability of different spheres of policymaking that have a bearing on NCDs, and in monitoring, in order to support Governments in their efforts to implement health-in-all-policies and whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.